

DUNRAVEN RANCH

By CAPTAIN CHARLES KING (with Portrait of the Author).

COMPLETE

[DECEMBER, 1888]

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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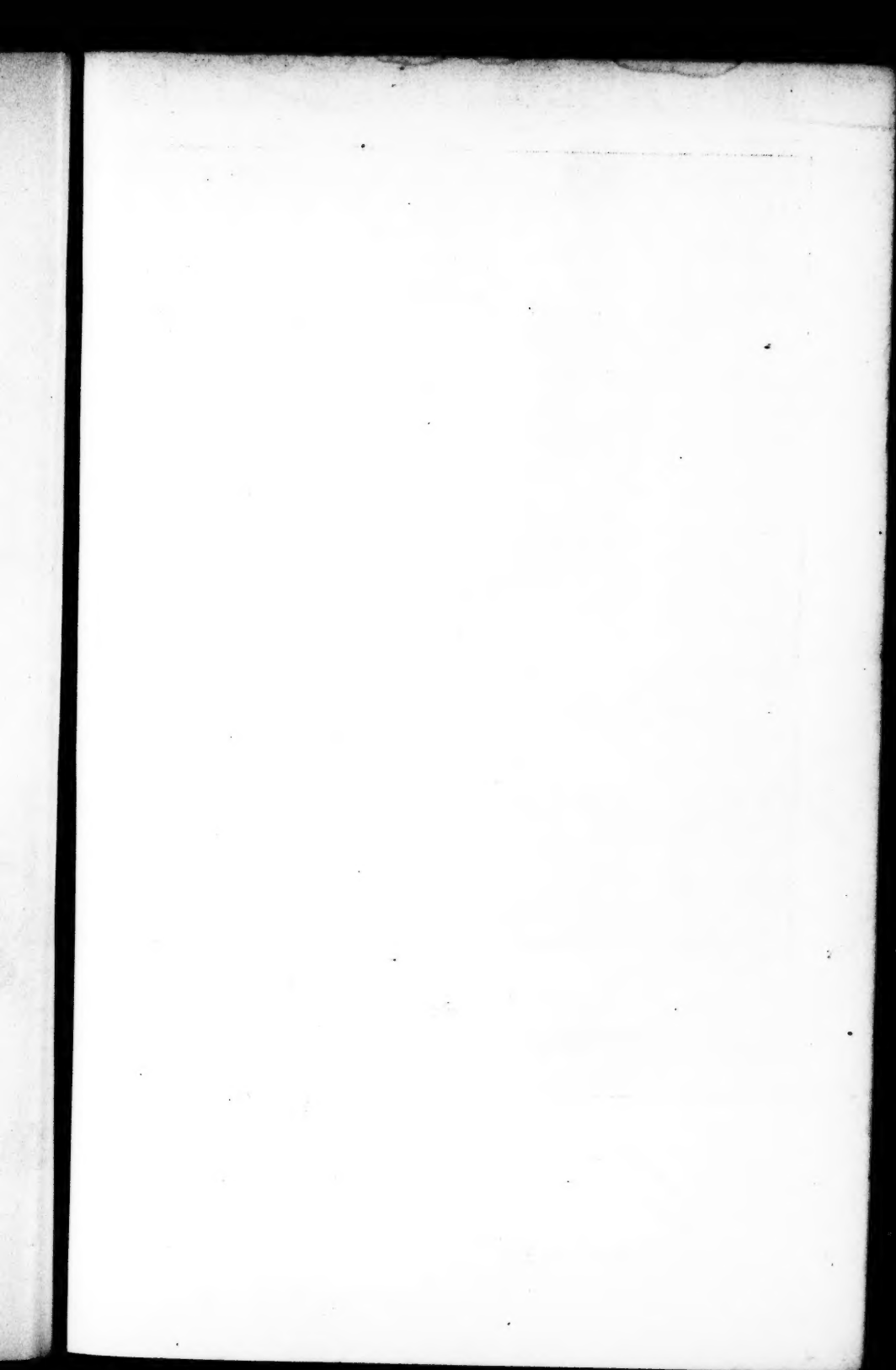
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Charles King
Capt. U.S.A.

DUNRAVEN RANCH.

BY

CHARLES KING,

U.S. ARMY,

AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "FROM THE RANKS,"

"THE DESERTER," ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:

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DUNRAVEN RANCH.

CHARLES KING

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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1888.

DUNRAVEN RANCH.

I.

IT was nearly midnight, and still the gay party lingered on the veranda. There had been a fortnight of "getting settled" at the new post, preceded by a month of marching that had brought the battalion from distant service to this strange, Texan station. The newcomers had been hospitably welcomed by the officers of the little garrison of infantry, and now, in recognition of their many courtesies, the field-officer commanding the arriving troops had been entertaining the resident officers and ladies at dinner. The colonel was a host in himself, but preferred not to draw too heavily on his reserves of anecdote and small-talk, so he had called in two of his subalterns to assist in the pleasant duty of being attentive to the infantry ladies, and just now, at 11.45 P.M., he was wondering if Lieutenant Perry had not too literally construed his instructions, for that young gentleman was devoting himself to Mrs. Belknap in a manner so marked as to make the captain, her lawful lord and master, manifestly uneasy.

Mrs. Belknap, however, seemed to enjoy the situation immensely. She was a pretty woman at most times, as even her rivals admitted. She was a beautiful woman at all times, was the verdict of the officers of the regiment when they happened to speak of the matter among themselves. She was dark, with lustrous eyes and sweeping lashes, with coral lips and much luxuriance of tress, and a way of glancing sideways from under her heavily-fringed eyelids that the younger and more impressionable men found quite irresistible when accorded the rare luxury of a *le-à-le*. Belknap was a big and boisterous man; Mrs. Belknap was small in stature, and soft—very soft—of voice. Belknap was either brusquely repellent or oppressively cordial in manner; Mrs. Belknap was either gently and exasperatingly indifferent to those whom she did not care to attract, or caressingly sweet to those whose

attentions she desired. In their own regiment the young officers soon found that unless they wished to be involved in an unpleasantness with Belknap it was best to be only very moderately devoted to his pretty wife, and those to whom an unpleasantness with the big captain might have had no terrors of consequence were deterred by the fact that Mrs. Belknap's devotee among the "youngsters" had invariably become an object of coldness and aversion to the other dames and damsels of the garrison. Very short-lived, therefore, had been the little flirtations that sprang up from time to time in those frontier posts wherein Captain and Mrs. Belknap were among the chief ornaments of society; but now matters seemed to be taking other shape. From the very day that handsome Ned Perry dismounted in front of Belknap's quarters and with his soldierly salute reported to the then commanding officer that Colonel Brainard and his battalion of cavalry would arrive in the course of two or three hours, Mrs. Belknap had evinced a contentment in his society and assumed an air of quasi-proprietorship that served to annoy her garrison sisters more than a little. For the time being all the cavalymen were bachelors, either by actual rank or "by brevet," as none of the ladies of the —th accompanied the battalion on its march, and none were expected until the stations of the regiment in its new department had been definitely settled. The post surgeon, too, was living a life of single blessedness as the early spring wore on, for his good wife had betaken herself, with the children, to the distant East as soon as the disappearance of the winter's snows rendered staging over the hard prairie roads a matter of no great danger or discomfort.

It was the doctor himself who, seated in an easy-chair at the end of the veranda, first called the colonel's attention to Perry's devotional attitude at Mrs. Belknap's side. She was reclining in a hammock, one little, slippered foot occasionally touching the floor and imparting a gentle, swinging motion to the affair, and making a soothing swish-swish of skirts along the matting underneath. Her jewelled hands looked very slender and fragile and white as they gleamed in the soft light that shone from the open windows of the parlor. They were busied in straightening out the kinks in the gold cord of his forage-cap and in rearranging a little silken braid and tassel that was fastened in clumsy, man-like fashion to one of the buttons at the side; he, seated in a camp-chair, was bending forward so that his handsome, shapely head was only a trifle higher than hers, and the two—hers so dark and rich in coloring, his so fair and massive and strong—came rather too close together for the equanimity of Captain Belknap, who had essayed to take a hand at whist in the parlor. One or two of the ladies, also, were silent observers of the scene,—silent as to the scene because, being in conversation at the time with brother officers of Lieutenant Perry, they were uncertain as yet how comments on his growing flirtation might be received. That their eyes should occasionally wander towards the hammock and then glance with sympathetic significance at those of some fair ally and intimate was natural enough. But when it became presently apparent that Mrs. Belknap was actually unfastening the little silken braid that had hung on Ned Perry's cap ever since

the day of his arrival,—all the while, too, looking shyly up in his eyes as her fingers worked; when it was seen that she presently detached it from the button and then, half hesitatingly, but evidently in compliance with his wishes, handed it to him; when he was seen to toss it carelessly—even contemptuously—away and then bend down lower, as though gazing into her shaded eyes,—Mrs. Lawrence could stand it no longer.

“Mr. Graham,” said she, “isn’t your friend Mr. Perry something of a flirt?”

“Who?—Ned?” asked Mr. Graham, in well-feigned amaze and with sudden glance towards the object of the inquiry. “How on earth should I know anything about it? Of course you do not seek expert testimony in asking me. He tries, I suppose, to adapt himself to circumstances. But why do you ask?”

“Because I see that he has been inducing Mrs. Belknap to take off that little tassel on the button of his cap. He has worn it when off duty ever since he came; and we supposed it was something he cherished; I know *she* did.”

Graham broke forth in a peal of merry laughter, but gave no further reply, for just then the colonel and the doctor left their chairs, and, sauntering over to the hammock, brought mighty relief to Belknap at the whist-table and vexation of spirit to his pretty wife. The flirtation was broken up at a most interesting point, and Perry, rising suddenly, came over and joined Mrs. Lawrence.

If she expected to see him piqued or annoyed at the interruption and somewhat perturbed in manner, she was greatly mistaken. Nothing could have been more sunshiny and jovial than the greeting he gave her. A laughing apology to Graham for spoiling his *tele-à-telle* was accomplished in a moment, and then down by her side he sat and plunged into a merry description of his experiences at dinner, where he had been placed next to the chaplain’s wife on the one hand, and she had been properly aggrieved at his attentions to Mrs. Belknap on the other.

“You must remember that Mrs. Wells is a very strict Presbyterian, Mr. Perry; and, for that matter, none of us have seen a dinner such as the colonel gave us this evening for ever and ever so long. We are quite unused to the ways of civilization; whereas you have just come from the East—and long leave. Perhaps it is the fashion to be all devotion to one’s next-door neighbor at dinner.”

“Not if she be as repellent and venerable as Mrs. Wells, I assure you. Why, I thought she would have been glad to leave the table when, after having refused sherry and Pontet-Canet for upwards of an hour, her glass was filled with champagne when she happened to be looking the other way.”

“It is the first dinner of the kind she has ever seen here, Mr. Perry, and I don’t suppose either Mr. or Mrs. Wells has been up so late before in years. He would have enjoyed staying and watching whist, but she carried him off almost as soon as we left the table. Our society has been very dull, you know,—only ourselves at the post all this last year, and nobody outside of it.”

"One would suppose that with all this magnificent cattle-range there would be some congenial people ranching near you. Are there none at all?"

"Absolutely none! There are some ranches down in the Washita country, but only one fine one near us; and that might as well be on the other side of the Atlantic. No one from there ever comes here; and Dr. Quin is the only living soul in the garrison who ever got within the walls of that ranch. What he saw there he positively refuses to tell, despite all our entreaty."

"You don't tell me there's a ranch with a mystery here near Rossiter!" exclaimed Mr. Perry, with sudden interest.

"Why, I do, indeed! Is it possible you have been here two whole weeks and haven't heard of Dunraven Ranch?"

"I've heard there was such a thing; I saw it from a distance when out hunting the other day. But what's the mystery?—what's the matter with it?"

"That's what we all want to know,—and cannot find out. Now, *there* is an exploit worthy your energy and best efforts, Mr. Perry. There is a big, wealthy, well-stocked ranch, the finest homestead buildings, we are told, in all this part of Texas. They say it is beautifully furnished,—that it has a fine library, a grand piano, all manner of things indicative of culture and refinement among its occupants,—but the owner only comes around once or twice a year, and is an iceberg of an Englishman. All the people about the ranch are English, too, and the most repellent, boorish, discourteous lot of men you ever saw. When the Eleventh were here they did everything they could to be civil to them, but not an invitation would they accept, not one would they extend; and so from that day to this none of the officers have had any intercourse with the people at the ranch, and the soldiers know very little more. Once or twice a year some very ordinary looking men arrive who are said to be very distinguished people—in England; but they remain only a little while, and go away as suddenly as they came."

"And you have never seen any of them?"

"Never, except at a distance. Nor has any one of the officers, except Dr. Quin."

"And you have never heard anything about the inmates and why they keep up this policy of exclusiveness?"

"We have heard all manner of things,—some of them wildly romantic, some mysteriously tragic, and all of them, probably, absurd. At all events, Captain Lawrence has told me he did not wish me to repeat what I had heard, or to be concerned in any way with the stories afloat: so you must ask somebody else. Try the doctor. To change the subject, Mr. Perry, I see you have lost that mysterious little silken braid and tassel you wore on your cap-button. I fancied there was some romance attached to it, and now it is gone."

Perry laughed, his blue eyes twinkling with fun: "If I will tell you how and where I got that tassel, will you tell me what you have heard about Dunraven Ranch?"

"I cannot, unless Captain Lawrence withdraws his prohibition.

Perhaps he will, though ; for I think it was only because he was tired of hearing all our conjectures and theories."

"Well, will you tell me if I can induce the captain to say he has no objection?" persisted Perry.

"I will to-morrow,—if you will tell me about the tassel to-night."

"Is it a positive promise?—You will tell me to-morrow all you have heard about Dunraven Ranch if I will tell you to-night all I know about the tassel?"

"Yes,—a promise."

"Very well, then. You are a witness to the compact, Graham. Now for my confession. I have worn that tassel ever since our parting ball at Fort Riley. That is to say, it has been fastened to that button ever since the ball until to-night ; but I've been mighty careful not to wear that cap on any kind of duty."

"And yet you let Mrs. Belknap take it off to-night?"

"Why shouldn't I? There was no sentiment whatever attached to it. I haven't the faintest idea whose it was, and only tied it there for the fun of the thing and to make Graham, here, ask questions."

"Mr. Perry!" gasped Mrs. Lawrence. "And do you mean that Mrs. Belknap knows?—that you told her what you have just told me?"

"Well, no," laughed Perry. "I fancy Mrs. Belknap thinks as you thought,—that it was a *gage d'amour*. Halloo! look at that light away out there across the prairie. What can *that* be?"

Mrs. Lawrence rose suddenly to her feet and gazed southeastward in the direction in which the young officer pointed. It was a lovely, starlit night. A soft wind was blowing gently from the south and bearing with it the fragrance of spring blossoms and far-away flowerets. Others, too, had arisen, attracted by Perry's sudden exclamation. Mrs. Belknap turned languidly in her hammock and glanced over her pretty white shoulder. The colonel followed her eyes with his and gave a start of surprise. The doctor turned slowly and composedly and looked silently towards the glistening object, and then upon the officers of the cavalry there fell sudden astonishment.

"What on earth could that have been?" asked the colonel. "It gleamed like the head-light of a locomotive, away down there in the valley of the Monee, then suddenly went out."

"Be silent a moment, and watch," whispered Mrs. Lawrence to Perry. "You will see it again ; and—watch the doctor."

Surely enough, even as they were all looking about and commenting on the strange apparition, it suddenly glared forth a second time, shining full and lustrous as an unclouded planet, yet miles away beyond and above the fringe of cottonwoods that wound southeastward with the little stream. Full half a minute it shone, and then, abruptly as before, was hidden from sight.

Perry was about starting forward to join the colonel, when a little hand was laid upon his arm.

"Wait : once more you'll see it," she whispered. "Then take me in to Captain Lawrence. Do you see that the doctor is leaving?"

Without saying a word to any one, the post surgeon had very quietly withdrawn from the group on the veranda. He could not well leave by the front gate without attracting attention; but he strolled leisurely into the hall, took up a book that lay on the table, and passed through the group of officers seated smoking and chatting there, entered the sitting-room on the south side of the hall,—the side opposite the parlor where the whist-game was in progress,—and there he was lost to sight.

A third time the bright light burst upon the view of the gazers. A third time, sharply and suddenly it disappeared. Then for a moment all was silence and watchfulness; but it came no more.

Perry looked questioningly in his companion's face. She had turned a little white, and he felt sure that she was shivering.

"Are you cold?" he asked her, gently.

"No,—not that; but I hate mysteries, after what I've heard, and we haven't seen that light in ever so long. Come here to the corner one moment." And she led him around to the other flank of the big wooden, barrack-like residence of the commanding officer.

"Look up there," she said, pointing to a dark window under the peaked dormer roof of the large cottage to the south. "That is the doctor's house."

In a few seconds a faint gleam seemed to creep through the slats. Then the slats themselves were thrown wide open, a white shade was lowered, and, with the rays behind it growing brighter every instant, a broad white light shone forth over the roof of the veranda. Another moment, and footsteps were heard along the doctor's porch,—footsteps that presently approached them along the grass.

"Come," she said, plucking at his sleeve,—*"come away: it is the doctor."*

"For what reason?" he answered. "That would seem like hiding. No, Mrs. Lawrence, let us stay until he comes."

But the doctor passed them with brief and courteous salutation,—spoke of the beauty of the night and the balm of the summery air,—and went in again by the main door to the colonel's quarters.

Then Perry turned to his partner: "Well, Mrs. Lawrence, what does it all mean? Is this part of what you had to tell me?"

"Don't ask me now. I—I did not *want* to see what we have seen, but I had heard queer stories and could not believe them. Take me in to Captain Lawrence, please. And, Mr. Perry, you won't speak of this to any one, will you? Indeed, if I had known, I would not have come out here for the world; but I didn't believe it, even when she went away and took the children."

"Who went away?"

"Mrs. Quin,—the doctor's wife. And she was such a sweet woman, and so devoted to him."

"Well, pardon me, Mrs. Lawrence, I don't see through this thing at all. Do you mean that the doctor has anything to do with the mystery?"

She bowed her head as they turned back to the house: "I must not tell you any more to-night. You will be sure to hear something of it

all, here. Everybody on the piazza saw the lights, and all who were here before you came knew what they meant."

"What were they?"

"Signals, of some kind, from Dunraven Ranch."

II.

Ned Perry hated reveille and morning stables about as vehemently as was possible to a young fellow who was in other respects thoroughly in love with his profession. A fairer type of the American cavalry officer, when once he got in saddle and settled down to business, one would hardly ask to find. Tall, athletic, slender of build, with frank, laughing blue eyes, curly, close-cropped, light-brown hair, and a twirling moustache that was a source of inexpressible delight to its owner and of some envy to his brother subalterns, Mr. Perry was probably the best-looking of the young officers who marched with the battalion to this far-away station on the borders of the Llano Estacado. He had been ten years in service, counting the four he spent as a cadet, had just won his silver bar as the junior first-lieutenant of the regiment, was full to the brim of health, energy, animal spirits, and fun, and, barring a few duns and debts in his earlier experiences, had never known a heavier care in the world than the transient and ephemeral anxiety as to whether he would be called up for recitation on a subject he had not so much as looked at, or "hived" absent from a roll-call he had lazily slept through. Any other man, his comrades said, would have been spoiled a dozen times over by the petting he had received from both men and women; but there was something essentially sweet and genial about his nature,—something "lacking in guile about his perceptions," said a cynical old captain of the regiment,—and a jovial, sunshiny way of looking upon the world as an Eden, all men and all women as friends, and the Army as the profession above all others, and these various attributes combined to make him popular with his kind and unusually attractive to the opposite sex. As a cadet he had been perpetually on the verge of dismissal because of the appalling array of demerits he could roll up against his name; and yet the very officers who jotted down the memoranda of his sins—omission and commission—against the regulations were men who openly said he "had the making of one of the finest soldiers in the class." As junior second-lieutenant—"plebe"—of the regiment, he had been welcomed by every man from the colonel down, and it was considered particularly rough that he should have to go to such a company as Captain Canker's, because Canker was a man who never got along with any of his juniors; but there was something so irrepressibly frank and contrite in Perry's boyish face when he would appear at his captain's door in the early morning and burst out with, "By Jove, captain! I slept through reveille again this morning, and never got down till stables were nearly over," that even that cross-grained but honest troop-commander was disarmed, and, though he threatened and reprimanded, he would never punish,—would never deny his subaltern the faintest privilege; and when promotion took the captain to another regiment he bade

good-by to Perry with eyes that were suspiciously wet. "Why, blow it all, what do you fellows hate Canker so for?" the youngster often said. "He ought to put me in arrest time and again, but he won't. Blamed if I don't put myself in arrest, or confine myself to the limits of the post, or do something, to cut all this going to town and hops and such things. Then I can stick to the troop like wax and get up at reveille; but if I'm out dancing till two or three in the morning it's no use, I tell you: I just *can't* wake up." Indeed, it was part of the unwritten records of the —th that while at Riley and having very sociable times, Ned Perry actually declined invitations, cooped himself up in garrison, and wore metaphorical sackcloth and ashes, for a whole week, in penance for certain neglects of duty brought about by the presence of a bevy of pretty girls. It was not until Canker went to him in person and virtually ordered him out that Perry could be induced to appear at the party given in farewell to two of the prettiest, who were to leave for the East on the following day.

And yet he was a disappointment in a certain way. It was always predicted of Ned Perry that he would be "married and done for" within a year of his graduation. Every new face in the five years that followed revived the garrison prophecy, "Now he's gone, sure!" but, however devoted he might seem to the damsel in question, however restless and impatient he might be when compelled by his duties to absent himself from her side, however promising to casual observers—perchance to the damsel herself—might be all the surface-indications, the absolute frankness with which he proclaimed his admiration to every listener, and the fact that he "had been just so with half a dozen other girls," enabled the cooler heads of the regiment to decide that the time had not yet come,—or at least the woman.

"I do wish," said Mrs. Turner, "that Mr. Perry would settle on somebody, because, just so long as he doesn't, it is rather hard to tell whom he belongs to." And, as Mrs. Turner had long been a reigning belle among the married women of the —th, and one to whom the young officers were always expected to show much attention, her whimsical way of describing the situation was readily understood.

But here at the new station—at far-away Rossiter—matters were taking on a new look. To begin with, the wives of the officers of the cavalry battalion had not joined, none of the ladies of the —th were here, and none would be apt to come until the summer's scouting-work was over and done with. The ladies of the little battalion of infantry *were* here, and, though there were no maiden sisters or cousins yet at the post (rest assured that more than one was already summoned), they were sufficient in number to enliven the monotony of garrison life and sufficiently attractive to warrant all the attention they cared to receive. It was beginning to be garrison chat that if Ned Perry had not "settled on somebody" as the ultimate object of his entire devotion, somebody had settled on him, and that was pretty Mrs. Belknap.

And though Ned Perry hated reveille and morning stables, as has been said, and could rarely "take his week" without making one or more lapses, here he was this beautiful May morning out at daybreak when it was his junior's tour of duty, and wending his way with that

youngster out to the line of cavalry stables, booted and spurred and equipped for a ride.

The colonel had listened with some surprise to his request, proffered just as the party was breaking up the night before, to be absent from garrison a few hours the following morning.

"But we have battalion drill at nine o'clock, Mr. Perry, and I need you there," he said.

"Oh, I'll be back in time for that, sir. I wanted to be off three hours or so before breakfast."

The colonel could not help laughing. "Of course you can go,—go wherever you like at those hours, when you are not on guard; but I never imagined you would want to get up so early."

"Neither I would, colonel, but I've been interested in something I heard about this ranch down the Monee, and thought I'd like to ride down and look at it."

"Go ahead, by all means, and see whether those lights came from there. It made me think of a play I once saw,—the 'Colleen Bawn,'—where a fellow's sweetheart signalled across the lake by showing a light in her cottage window just that way, three times, and he answered by turning out the lights in his room. Of course the distance wasn't anything like this; and there was no one here to turn down any light—Eh! what did you say?"

"I beg pardon, colonel. I didn't mean to interrupt," put in a gentle voice at his elbow, while a little hand on Perry's arm gave it a sudden and vigorous squeeze, "but Captain Lawrence has called me twice,—he will not re-enter after lighting his cigar,—and I must say good-night."

"Oh! good-night, Mrs. Lawrence. I'm sorry you go so early. We are going to reform you all in that respect as soon as we get fairly settled. Here's Perry, now, would sit up and play whist with me an hour yet."

"Not this night, colonel. He has promised to walk home with us" (another squeeze), "and go he must, or be a faithless escort. Good-night. We've had such a lovely, lovely time."

And Ned Perry, dazed, went with her to the gate, where Captain Lawrence was awaiting them. She had barely time to murmur,—

"You were just on the point of telling him about the doctor's lights. I cannot forgive myself for being the means of your seeing it; but keep my confidence, and keep—this, until everybody is talking about it: it will come soon enough."

Naturally, Mr. Perry went home somewhat perturbed in spirit and all alive with conjecture as to what these things could mean. The first notes of "assembly of the trumpeters"—generally known as "first call"—roused him from his sleep, and by the time the men marched out to stables he had had his plunge-bath, a vigorous rub, and a chance to think over his plans before following in their tracks, dressed for his ride. The astonishment of Lieutenant Parke, the junior of the troop, was something almost too deep for words when Perry came bounding to his side.

"What on earth brings you out, Ned?" was his only effort.

"Going for a gallop,—down the Monee: that's all. I haven't had a freshener for a week."

"Gad! we get exercise enough at morning drill, one would think, and our horses too. Oh!——" And Mr. Parke stopped suddenly. It flashed across him that perhaps Perry was going riding with a lady friend and the hour was *her* selection. If so, 'twas no business of his, and remarks were uncalled for. Accepting this as the one possible explanation of Perry's abnormal early rising, he curbed his tongue, and Perry, absorbed in his own projects and thinking of anything but what was passing through his comrade's brain, strode blithely over the springy turf, saying nothing further of his plan.

When he mounted and rode away from the stable Mr. Parke was outside at the picket-rope, and busily occupied in his duties, supervising the fastening of the fresh, spirited horses at the line, for the troop-commander was a man intolerant of disorder of any kind, and nothing more offended his eye than the sight of two or three of his chargers loose and plunging and kicking up and down the stable-yard. On the other hand, there was no one exploit that seemed to give the younger animals keener delight,—nothing that made the perpetrator a bigger hero in his own eyes or the object of greater envy among his fellows,—and as a consequence every device of which equine ingenuity was master was called into play, regularly as the morning came around, to break loose either from the controlling hand of the trooper or from the taut and straining picket-rope. The first care of the officer in charge and the troop-sergeants was, therefore, to see that all the horses were securely lashed and knotted. Not until he had examined every "halter-shank" was Mr. Parke at leisure to look around; but when he did, his comrade had disappeared from view.

The valley of the Monee, shallow, and bare of trees except in scattered clumps along the stream, stretched away southeastward for many a mile until lost to sight in the general level at the horizon. Off to the north and east the prairie rose and fell in long, low undulations, so devoid of abrupt slope of any kind as to seem absolutely flat to the unpractised eye. Southward and to the west of the lonely post the surface was relieved of this monotony by occasional gentle rise and swell. Nowhere, however, over the broad expanse was there sign of other vegetation than the gray-green carpet of buffalo-grass, and this carpet itself was mapped in fantastic pattern, the effect of prairie-fires more or less recent in occurrence. Where within a fortnight the flames had swept over the surface, all the bosom of the earth was one black barren, a land shunned for the time being by every living thing. Where by sudden freak of wind or fall of rain the scourging fires had been checked in their course, there lay broad wastes of virgin turf, already bleaching under the fierce Texan sun to the conventional gray of the buffalo-grass. But contrasted with these wide mantles of black and gray—contrasting sharply, too, because never blending—every mile or so were sudden patches of bright and lively green; and this was the hue of the sturdy young grass peeping up through the wastes that the flames had desolated late in March.

And over this broad level, horizon-bounded, not a moving object

could be seen. Far away, in little groups of three or four, black dots of grazing cattle marked the plain; and over in the "breaks" of the Monee, just beyond the fringing cottonwoods, two or three herds of Indian ponies were sleepily cropping their morning meal, watched by the little black imp of a boy whose dirty red blanket made the only patch of color against the southern landscape. Later in the day, when the sun mounted high in the heavens and the brisk westerly winds sent the clouds sailing swift across the skies, all the broad prairie seemed in motion, for then huge shadows swept its face with measured speed, and distant cattle and neighboring pony-herd appeared as though calmly and contentedly riding on a broad platform, Nature's own "observation-car," taking a leisurely journey towards the far-away Pacific.

But the sun was only just up as Mr. Parke came back from his inspection of the halter-fastenings and paused to look across the low valley. Far down to the southeast the rays seemed glinting on some bright objects clustered together within short range of the shadowy fringe, and the lieutenant shaded his eyes with his gauntlet and looked fixedly thitherward as he stood at the stable door.

"Some new tinning down at that English ranch they talk of, I suppose," was his explanation of the phenomenon, and then, "Wonder why Perry hasn't ridden to cultivate the acquaintance of those people before this. He was always the first man in the —th to find out who our neighbors were."

Pondering over this question, it occurred to Mr. Parke that Perry had said he was going down the Monee that morning; but nowhere was there a speck in sight that looked like loping horseman. To be sure, the trail bore close to the low bluffs that bounded the valley on the north by the time one had ridden a mile or so out from the post. He was probably hidden by this shoulder of the prairie, and would continue to be until he reached the bend, five miles below. No use watching for him then. Besides, he might not yet have started. Mr. Parke recalled the fact that he half suspected a while ago that Ned was going to ride—an early ante-breakfast ride—with a lady friend. Mrs. Belknap had her own horse, and was an accomplished *équestrienne*; Mrs. Lawrence rode fairly well, and was always glad to go, when somebody could give her a saddle and a reliable mount. There were others, too, among the ladies of the infantry garrison who were no novices *à cheval*. Mr. Parke had no intention whatever of prying into the matter. It was simply as something the officer in charge of stable-duty was entitled to know that he turned suddenly and called,—

"Sergeant Gwynne!"

He heard the name passed down the dark interior of the stable by the men sweeping out the stalls, and the prompt and cheery reply. The next instant a tall young trooper stepped forth into the blaze of early sunlight, his right hand raised in salute, and stood erect and motionless by the lieutenant's side.

"Did Mr. Perry take an extra horse, sergeant?"

"No, sir."

"I thought possibly he meant to take Roland. He's the best lady's-horse in the troop, is he not?"

"Yes, sir; but Roland is at the line now."

"Very well, then. That's all. I presume he has just ridden down to Dunraven." And Mr. Parke turned to look once more at the glinting objects down the distant valley. It was a moment or two before he was aware of the fact that the sergeant still stood there, instead of returning to his duties.

"I said that was all, sergeant: you can go back to your feeding." And then Mr. Parke turned in some surprise, for Sergeant Gwynne, by long odds the "smartest" and most soldierly of the non-commissioned officers of the cavalry battalion, for the first time in his history seemed to have forgotten himself. Though his attitude had not changed, his face had, and a strange look was in his bright blue eyes,—a look of incredulity and wonderment and trouble all combined. The lieutenant was fairly startled when, as though suddenly gathering himself together, the sergeant falteringly asked,—

"I beg pardon, sir, but—he had ridden—*where*?"

"Down to the ranch, sergeant,—that one you can just see, away down the valley."

"I know, sir; but—the name?"

"Dunraven Ranch."

For an instant the sergeant stood as though dazed, then, with sudden effort, saluted, faced about, and plunged into the dark recesses of the stable.

III.

Meantime, Lieutenant Perry was riding blithely down the winding trail, totally unconscious that his movements were of the faintest consequence to anybody but himself, and equally heedless of their being a source of speculation. His horse was one he rejoiced in, full of spirit and spring and intelligence; the morning was beautiful,—just cool enough to be exhilarating; his favorite hound, Bruce, went bounding over the turf under the slopes, or ranging off through the cottonwoods along the stream, or the shallow, sandy *arroyos*, where the grass and weeds grew rank and luxuriant. Every now and then with sudden rush and whir a drove of prairie-chickens would leap from their covert, and, after vigorous flapping of wings for a few rods, would go skimming restfully in long easy curve, and settle to earth again a hundred yards away, as though suddenly reminded of the fact that this was mating-time and no gentleman would be mean enough to shoot at such a season. Every little while, too, with prodigious kicking of dust and show of heels, with eyes fairly bulging out of his feather-brained head, and tall lop-ears laid flat on his back, a big jack-rabbit would bound off into space, and go tearing across the prairie in mad race for his threatened life, putting a mile between him and the Monee before he began to realize that the two quadrupeds ambling along the distant trail were obedient to the will of that single rider, who had no thought to spare for game so small. Some Indian ponies, grazing across his pathway, set back their stunted ears, and, cow-like, refused to budge at sight and hearing of the big American horse; whereat a little vagabond of a Cheyenne, not ten years old nor four feet high, set up a shrill

chatter and screech and let drive a few well-directed clods of turf, and then showed his white teeth in a grin as Perry sung out a cheery "*How! sonny,*" and spurred on through the opening thoroughfare, heedless of spiteful pony looks or threatening heels.

Perry's spirits rose with every rod. Youth, health, contentment, all were his, and his heart was warm towards his fellow-men. To the best of his reckoning, he had not an enemy or detractor in the world. He was all gladness of nature, all friendliness, frankness, and cordiality. The toughest cow-boy whom they had met on the long march down, the most crabbed of the frontiersmen they had ever encountered, was never proof against such sunshine as seemed to irradiate his face. He would go out of his way at any time to meet and hail a fellow-man upon the prairies, and rarely came back without knowing all about him,—where he was from, whither he was bound, and what were his hopes and prospects. And as for himself, no man was readier to answer question or to meet in friendliest and most jovial spirit the rough but well-meant greetings of "the Plains."

Being in this frame of mind to an extent even greater than his normal wont, Mr. Perry's eyes glistened, and he struck spur to hasten Nolan's stride, when, far ahead, and coming towards him on the trail, he saw a horseman like himself. Being in this mood of sociability, he was something more than surprised to see that all of a sudden that horseman had reined in—a mere black dot a mile away—and was presumably examining him as he advanced. Hostile Indians there had been none for many a long month, "road-agents" would have starved in a region where there practically were no roads, cow-boys might—and did—get on frolics and have wild "tears" at times, but who ever heard of their being hostile, man to man? Yet Perry was plainsman enough to tell, even at the mile of distance, that the stranger had halted solely to scrutinize *him*, and, next, to his vast astonishment, that something in his appearance had proved either alarming or suspicious, for the horseman had turned abruptly, plunged through the timber and across the stream, and in another moment, veering that way himself to see, Perry marked him fairly racing into the mouth of a shallow ravine, or "break," that entered the valley from the south, and there he was lost to sight.

"What an ill-mannered galoot!" was his muttered comment, as he gave Nolan brief chance to crop the juicy grass, while his perturbed rider sat gazing across the stream in the direction taken by the shy horseman. "I've half a mind to drop the ranch and put out after that fellow. That ravine can't go in so very far but what he must soon show up on the level prairie; and I'll bet Nolan could run him down." After a moment's reflection, however, Mr. Perry concluded that, as he had come so far and was now nearly within rifle-shot of the mysterious goal of his morning ride, he might as well let the stranger go, and pushed ahead, himself, for Dunraven.

The stream bent southward just at the point where he had first caught sight of the horseman, and around that point he knew the ranch to be. Very probably that was one of the ranchmen of whom Mrs. Lawrence had spoken,—churlish fellows, with a civil word for

nobody, grim and repellent. Why, certainly! That accounted for his evident desire to avoid the cavalryman; but he need not have been in such desperate haste,—need not have kept at such unapproachable bounds, as though he shunned even being seen. That was the queer thing, thought Perry. He acted just as though he did not want to be recognized. Perhaps he'd been up to some devilment at the ranch.

This thought gave spur to his speed, and Nolan, responsive to his master's mood, leaped forward along the winding trail once more. The point was soon reached and turned, and the first object that caught Perry's eye was a long row of stakes stretching from the cottonwoods straight to the south up the gentle slope to the prairie, and indicating beyond all question the presence there of a stout and high and impassable wire fence. There are few things the cavalryman holds in meaner estimate.

"That marks the western limit," thought Perry to himself, "and doubtless reaches miles away to the south, from what I hear. Now, where does one enter?"

A little farther on he came upon a trail leading from the low bluffs to his left hand. It crossed the winding bridle-path on which he rode, though some of the hoof-tracks seemed to join, and wheel-tracks too. He had marked that between the fort and the point no sign of wheel appeared: it was a hoof-trail and nothing more. Now a light and little-travelled wagon-track came in from the north, and while one branch seemed to cross the Monee and to ascend the opposite slopes close along the wire fence, the other joined him and went on down the stream. This he decided to follow.

A ride of a few hundred yards brought him to a point where a shoulder of bluff twisted the trail well in towards the stream, and he, thinking to cross and reconnoitre on the other shore, turned Nolan in that way, and was suddenly brought up standing by the heaviest and most forbidding wire fence he had ever seen. Yes, there it stretched away through the cottonwoods, straight as a die, back to the angle whence started the southward course he first had noted, and, looking down stream, far as the eye could reach, he marked it, staked as though by the theodolite itself, straight as surveyor could make it, a rigid line to the southeast. Sometimes the stream lay on one side, sometimes on the other; so, too, the cottonwoods; but there, grim and bristling and impassable, over five feet high, and fairly snarling with its sharp and jagged teeth, this inhuman barrier lay betwixt him and the lands of Dunraven Ranch.

"Well," thought Perry, "I've often heard an Englishman's house was his castle, but who would have thought of staking and wiring in half a county—half a Texas county—in this hoggish way? How far down is the entrance, anyhow?"

Following the trail, he rode down-stream a full half-mile, and still there seemed no break. Nowhere on the other shore was there sign of bridle-path leading up the slopes. Turning to his left in some impatience, he sent Nolan at rapid lope across the intervening "bottom," and soon reached the bluffs, which rose perhaps forty or fifty feet above the stream. Once on the crest, the prairie stretched before him, north-

ward, level as a floor, until it met the sky; but it was southward he longed to look, and thither quickly turned. Yes, there it lay,—Dunraven Ranch, in all its lonely majesty. From where he gazed the nearest building stood a good long mile away. That it was the homestead he divined at once, for a broad veranda ran around the lower story, and white curtains were visible at the dormer-windows of the upper floor. Back of it and on the eastern flank were other buildings, massive-looking, single-storied affairs,—evidently stables, storehouses, and corrals. There was a tall windmill there,—an odd sight in so remote a region,—and a big water-tank. Perry wondered how it ever got there. Then at the southwest angle was a building that looked like an office of some kind. He could see horses tethered there, and what seemed to be human figures moving about. Beyond it all, to the east and south, were herds of grazing cattle, and here and there in the dim distance a horseman moved over the prairie. This reminded him of the stranger who had given him the slip; and he gazed westward in search of him.

Far up the valley, between him and the distant post, he could plainly see a black object just descending the slopes from the southern prairie to the stream. Not another was in sight that his practised eye did not know to be cattle. That, then, was his horseman, once more going fort-wards in the valley, after having made a three- or four-mile *détour* to avoid him. "Now, what sort of a Christian is that fellow?" thought Perry, as he gazed at the distant speck. "Going to the fort, too. By thunder! I'll find out who *he* is, anyhow. Now I'm going to the ranch."

Down the slopes he rode. Down the winding trail once more he trotted, peering through every gap among the cottonwoods, slaking Nolan's thirst at a little pool in the stream, and then, after another long half-mile, he came to a sudden turn to the right. The road dipped and twisted through the stream-bed, rose to the other side, wound through the cottonwoods and then out on the open turf. Huzza! There it stretched up the slopes straight away for the south, straight through a broad gap between two heavy gate-posts standing on the stake-line of that rigid fence. Nolan broke into a brisk canter and gave a neigh of salutation; Perry's eyes glistened with anticipation as he bent over his charger's neck, keenly searching the odd-looking structure growing on his vision as they neared the fence. Then, little by little, Nolan's eager stride shortened and grew choppy. Another moment, and horse and rider reined up short in disappointment. Between the gate-posts swung a barrier of cobweb lightness, slender and airy as ever spider wove, but bristling with barbs, stiff as "bullfinch" and unyielding as steel. One glance showed Perry that this inhospitable gate was firmly locked.

For a moment he sat in saddle, studying the situation, while Nolan poked his head over the topmost strand of wire and, keeping at respectful distance from the glittering barbs, gazed wistfully over the enclosed prairie in search of comrade quadruped who could tell him what manner of place this was. Meantime, his rider was intently eying the heavy padlock that was secured on the inner side of the gate. It was square in shape, massive and bulky,—something utterly unlike any-

thing he had ever seen among the quartermaster's stores. Dismounting, and holding Nolan well back from the aggressive fence with one hand, he gingerly passed the other through the spike-fringed aperture and turned the padlock so as to get a better view. It was of English make, as he surmised, and of strength sufficient to resist anything short of a trip-hammer. Evidently no admission was to be gained here, he reasoned; and yet it was through here that that horseman had come but an hour before. Here were the fresh hoof-prints in the trail, and it was evident that the rider had dismounted, opened the gate, led his horse through, closed and fastened it, then remounted and ridden away. Perry was plainsman enough to read this from the hoof-prints. Studying them carefully, a look of surprise came into his face: he bent down and closely examined the two or three that were most clearly defined upon the trail, then gave a long whistle as a means of expressing his feelings and giving play to his astonishment:

"Johnny Bull holds himself too high and mighty to have anything to do with us blarsted Yankees, it seems, except when he wants his horses shod. These shoes were set at the post blacksmith-shop, or I'm a duffer," was the lieutenant's verbal comment. "Now, how was it done without the quartermaster's knowing it? That's the cavalry shoe!"

Pondering over this unlooked-for revelation, Mr. Perry once more mounted, and turned his disappointed steed again down-stream. He had determined to follow the fence in search of another opening. A mile he rode among the cottonwoods and across low grassy points, and still that inflexible barrier stretched grimly between him and the open prairie to the south. Once, up a long shallow "break," he caught sight of the roofs of some of the ranch-buildings full a thousand yards away, and realized that he had passed to the east of them and was farther from the goal of his ambition than when he stood at that bristling gate. At last, full half a mile farther on, he saw that a wire fence ran southward again across the prairie, as though marking the eastern boundary of the homestead-enclosure, and, conjecturing that there was probably a trail along that fence and an opening through, even if the southeastward line should be found fenced still farther, he sent Nolan through the Monee to the open bank on the northern side, cantered along until the trail turned abruptly southward, and, following it, found himself once more at the fence just where the heavy corner-post stood deeply embedded in the soil. Sure enough, here ran another fence straight up the gentle slope to the south, a trail along its eastern side, and a broad cattle-gap, dusty and tramped with the hoofs of a thousand steers, was left in the fence that, prolonged down-stream, spanned the northern boundary. Inside the homestead-lot all was virgin turf.

Following the southward trail, Perry rode briskly up the long incline. It was east of this fence he had seen the cattle-herds and their mounted watchers. He was far beyond the ranch-buildings, but felt sure that, once well up on the prairie, he could have an uninterrupted view of them and doubtless meet some of the ranch people and satisfy himself what there was in the stories of their churlish and

repellent demeanor. The sun was climbing higher all this time, and he, eager in pursuit of his reconnoissance, gave little heed to fleeting minutes. If fair means could accomplish it, he and Nolan were bound to have acquaintance with Dunraven Ranch.

Ten minutes' easy lope brought him well up on the prairie. There—westward now—was the mysterious clump of brown buildings, just as far away as when he stood, baffled and disappointed, by the gate-way on the Monee. Here, leading away towards the distant buildings, was a bridle-path. Here in the fence was a gap just such as he had encountered on the stream, and that gap was barred and guarded by the counterpart of the first gate and firmly secured by a padlock that was the other's twin. Mr. Perry's comment at this point of his explorations was brief and characteristic, if not objectionable. He gave vent to the same low whistle, half surprise, half vexation, that had comforted his soul before, but supplemented the whistle with the unnecessary remark, "Well, I'll be damned!"

Even Nolan entered his protest against such incredible exclusiveness. Thrusting his lean head far over the topmost wire as before, he signalled long and shrill,—a neigh that would have caught the ear of any horse within a mile,—and then, all alert, he waited for an answer. It came floating on the rising wind, a responsive call, a signal as eager and confident as his own, and Nolan and Nolan's rider whirled quickly around to see the source from whence it rose. Four hundred yards away, just appearing over a little knoll in the prairie, and moving towards them from the direction of a distant clump of grazing cattle, another horse and rider came trotting into hailing-distance; and Perry, his bright blue eyes dilating, and Nolan, his dainty, sensitive ears pricked forward, turned promptly to meet and greet the new arrivals.

For fifty yards or so the stranger rode confidently and at rapid trot. Perry smilingly watched the out-turned toes, the bobbing, "bent-over" seat, and angular elbows that seemed so strange and out of place on the broad Texan plain. He could almost see the "crop" in the free hand, and was smiling to himself at the idea of a "crop" to open wire gates, when he became aware of the fact that the stranger's mien had changed; confidence was giving place to hesitancy, and he was evidently checking the rapid trot of his horse and throwing his weight back on the cantele, while his feet, thrust through to the very heels in the gleaming steel stirrups, were braced in front of the powerful shoulders of the bay. The horse wanted to come, the rider plainly wanted to stop. Another moment, and Perry could see that the stranger wore eyeglasses and had just succeeded in bridging them on his nose and was glaring at him with his chin high in air. They were within two hundred yards of each other by this time, and, to Perry's astonishment, the next thing the stranger did was to touch sharply his horse with barbed heel, whirl him spitefully about, and go bobbing off across the prairie at lively canter, standing up in his stirrups, and bestriding his steed as though his object were not so much a ride as a game of leap-frog.

It was evident that he had caught sight of Perry when Nolan neighed, had ridden at once to meet him, expecting to find some one connected with the ranch, and had veered off in disgust the moment he

was able to recognize the uniform and horse-equipments of the United States Cavalry.

IV.

Sweet-tempered a fellow as Mr. Perry confessedly was, there was something in the stranger's conduct that galled him inexpressibly. The tenets of "society," the formalities of metropolitan life, have no recognition whatsoever on the wide frontier when once the confines of the garrison are passed. Out on the broad expanse of the Plains the man who shuns the greeting of his fellow is set down at once as a party whose antecedents are shadowy and whose character is suspicious; and never before in his experience of several years and his wanderings from the Yellowstone to the Washita had Ned Perry met a frontiersman who fled at sight of him, except one horse-thief. From his handsome mount, his garb, and his general appearance, Perry set this stranger down as one of the Englishmen residing at the ranch. It was not fear of arrest and capture that sent *him* scowling away across the prairie; it was deliberate intent to avoid, and this was, to Perry's thinking, tantamount to insult. One moment he gazed after the retreating form of the horseman, then clapped his forage-cap firmly down upon his head, shook free the rein, and gave Nolan the longed-for word. Another instant, and with set teeth and blazing, angry eyes he was thundering at headlong speed, swooping down upon the unconscious stranger in pursuit. Before that sunburned, curly-haired, bulkily-framed young man had the faintest idea of what was impending, Mr. Perry was reining in his snorting steed alongside and cuttingly accosting him:

"I beg your pardon, my good sir, but may I ask what you mean by trotting away when it must have been evident that I wanted to speak with you?"

The stranger turned slightly and coolly eyed the flushed and indignant cavalryman. They were trotting side by side now, Nolan plunging excitedly, but the English horse maintaining his even stride; and stronger contrast of type and style one could scarcely hope to find. In rough tweed shooting-jacket and cap, brown Bedford cords fitting snugly at the knee but flapping like shapeless bags from there aloft to the waist, in heavy leather gaiters and equally heavy leather gloves, the stocky figure of the Englishman had nothing of grace or elegance, but was sturdy, strong, and full of that burly self-reliance which is so characteristic of the race. Above his broad, stooping shoulders were a bull neck, reddened by the sun, a crop of close-curling, light-brown hair, a tanned and honest face lighted up by fearless gray eyes and shaded by a thick and curling beard of lighter hue than the hair of his massive head. He rode with the careless ease and supremé confidence of the skilled horseman, but with that angularity of foot and elbow, that roundness of back and bunching of shoulders, that incessant rise and fall with every beat of his horse's powerful haunch, that the effect was that of neither security nor repose. His saddle, too, was the long, flat-seated, Australian model, pig-skin, with huge rounded leathern cushions circling in front and over the knees, adding to the cumbrous-

ness of his equipment and in no wise to the comfort; but his bit and curb-chain were of burnished steel, gleaming as though fresh from the hands of some incomparable English groom, and the russet reins were soft and pliable, telling of excellent stable management and discipline. Perry couldn't help admiring that bridle, even in his temporary fit of indignation.

As for him,—tall, slender, elegantly made, clothed in the accurately-fitting undress "blouse" of the army and in riding-breeches that displayed to best advantage the superb moulding of his powerful thighs, sitting like centaur well down in the saddle, his feet and lower legs, cased in natty riding-boots, swinging close in behind the gleaming shoulders of his steed, erect as on parade, yet swaying with every motion of his horse, graceful, gallant, and to the full as powerful as his burly companion, the advantage in appearance was all on Perry's side, and was heightened by Nolan's spirited action and martial trappings. Perry was an exquisite in his soldier taste, and never, except on actual campaign, rode his troop-horse without his brodered saddle-cloth and gleaming bosses. All this, and more, the Englishman seemed quietly noting as, finally, without the faintest trace of irritability, with even a suspicion of humor twinkling about the corners of his mouth, he replied,—

"A fellow may do as he likes when he's on his own bailiwick, I suppose."

"All the same, wherever I've been, from here to Assiniboia, men meet like Christians, unless they happen to be road-agents or cattle-thieves. What's more, I am an officer of a regiment just arrived here, and, from the Missouri down, there isn't a ranch along our trail where we were not welcome and whose occupants were not 'hail-fellow-well-met' in our camps. You are the first people to shun us; and, as that fort yonder was built for your protection in days when it was badly needed, I want to know what there is about its garrison that is so obnoxious to Dunraven Ranch,—that's what you call it, I believe?"

"That's what—it is called."

"Well, here! I've no intention of intruding where we're not wanted. I simply didn't suppose that on the broad prairies of the West there was such a place as a ranch where one of my cloth was unwelcome. I am Mr. Perry, of the —th Cavalry, and I'm bound to say I'd like to know what you people have against us. Are you the proprietor?"

"I'm not. I'm only an employee."

"Who is the owner?"

"He's not here now."

"Who is here who can explain the situation?"

"Oh, as to that, I fancy I can do it as well as anybody. It is simply because we have to do pretty much as you fellows,—obey orders. The owner's orders are not aimed at you any more than anybody else. He simply wants to be let alone. He bought this tract and settled here because he wanted a place where he could have things his own way,—see people whom he sent for and nobody else. Every man in his employ is expected to stick to the ranch so long as he is on the payroll, and to carry out his instructions. If he can't, he may go."

"And your instructions are to prevent people getting into the ranch?"

"Oh, hardly that, you know. We don't interfere. There's never any one to come, as a rule, and, when they do, the fence seems to be sufficient."

"Amplly, I should say; and yet were I to tell you that I had business with the proprietor and needed to ride up to the ranch, you would open the gate yonder, I suppose?"

"No: I would tell you that the owner was away, and that in his absence I transacted all business for him."

"Well, thank you for the information given me, at all events. May I ask the name of your misanthropical boss? You might tell him I called."

"Several officers called three years ago, but he begged to be excused."

"And what is the name?"

"Mr. Maitland—is what he is called."

"All right. Possibly the time may come when Mr. Maitland will be as anxious to have the cavalry around him as he is now to keep it away. But if you ever feel like coming up to the fort, just ride in and ask for me."

"I feel like it a dozen times a week, you know; but a man mustn't quarrel with his bread-and-butter. I met one of your fellows once on a hunt after strayed mules, and he asked me in, but I couldn't go. Sorry, you know, and all that, but the owner won't have it."

"Well, then there's nothing to do for it but say good-day to you. I'm going back. Possibly I'll see some of your people up at Rossiter when they come to get a horse shod."

"A horse shod! Why, man alive, we shoe all our horses here!"

"Well, that fellow who rode out of your north gate and went up towards the fort about an hour or so ago had his horse shod at a cavalry forge, or I'm a duffer."

A quick change came over the Englishman's face: a flush of surprise and anger shot up to his forehead; he wheeled about and gazed eagerly, loweringly, back towards the far-away buildings.

"How do you know there was—— What fellow did you see?" he sharply asked.

"Oh, I don't know who he was," answered Perry, coolly. "He avoided me just as pointedly as you did,—galloped across the Monee and out on the prairie to dodge me; but he came out of that gate on the stream, locked it after him, and went on up to the fort; and his horse had cavalry shoes. Good-day to you, my Britannic friend. Come and see us when you get tired of prison-life." And, with a grin, Mr. Perry turned and rode rapidly away, leaving the other horseman in a brown study.

Once fairly across the Monee, he ambled placidly along, thinking of the odd situation of affairs at this great prairie-reservation, and almost regretting that he had paid the ranch the honor of a call. Reaching the point where the wagon-tracks crossed the stream to the gate-way in the boundary fence, he reined in Nolan and looked through a vista in

the cottonwoods. There was the Englishman, dismounted, stooping over the ground, and evidently examining the hoof-prints at the gate. Perry chuckled at the sight, then, whistling for Bruce, who had strayed off through the timber, he resumed his jaunty way to the post.

In the events of the morning there were several things to give him abundant cause for thought, if not for lively curiosity, but he had not yet reached the sum total of surprises in store for him. He was still two miles out from the fort, and riding slowly along the bottom, when he became aware of a trooper coming towards him on the trail. The sunbeams were glinting on the polished ornaments of his forage-cap and on the bright yellow chevrons of his snugly-fitting blouse. Tall and slender and erect was the coming horseman, a model of soldierly grace and carriage, and as he drew nearer and his hand went up to the cap-visor in salute a gesture from his young superior brought an instant pressure on the rein, and horse and man became an animated statue. It was a wonderfully sudden yet easy check of a steed in rapid motion, and Mr. Perry, a capital rider himself, could not withhold his admiration.

"Where did you learn that sudden halt, sergeant?" he asked. "I never saw anything so quick except the Mexican training; but that strains a horse and throws him on his haunches."

"It is not uncommon abroad, sir," was the quiet answer. "I saw it first in the English cavalry; and it is easy to teach the horse."

"I must get you to show me the knack some day. I've noticed it two or three times, and would like to learn it. What I stopped you for was this: you've been stable-sergeant ever since we got here, have you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then if anybody besides members of the troop had horses shod at our forge you would be pretty apt to know it?"

"I know that no one has, sir." And a flush was rising to the young sergeant's face and a pained look hovering about his bright blue eyes. Yet his manner was self-restrained and full of respect.

"Don't think I'm intimating anything to the contrary, Sergeant Gwynne. No soldier in the regiment more entirely holds the confidence of his captain—of all the officers—than you. I was not thinking of that. But somebody down there at that big ranch below us has had his horse shod by a cavalry farrier,—it may have been done while the Eleventh were here,—and, while I knew you would not allow it at our forge, I thought it possible that it might be done in your absence."

"It's the first time I've been out of sight of the stables since we came to the post, sir, and the captain gave me permission to ride down the valley this morning. May I ask the lieutenant why he thinks some ranchman is getting his shoeing done here at the post?"

"I've been down there this morning, and met a man coming up. He avoided me, and rode over to the south side, and so excited my curiosity; and as they keep that whole place enclosed in a wire fence, and he had evidently come out of the north gate, I was struck by the sight of the hoof-prints: they were perfectly fresh there on the trail, and plain as day. There's no mistaking the shoe, you know. By the

way, he rode up to the fort, and probably entered at your side of the garrison: did you see him?"

"No, sir, and, except for breakfast,—just after reveille,—I have been at stables all the morning. I was there when the lieutenant got his horse."

"Yes, I remember. Then no one rode in from the valley?"

"No civilian,—no ranchman, sir. The only horsemen I've seen were some Cheyenne scouts during the last two hours, and Dr. Quin,—just before sick-call."

"Dr. Quin!—the post surgeon! Are you sure, sergeant?"

"Certainly, sir. The doctor rode into the post just about an hour after the lieutenant left,—coming up the valley too. He went right around to his own stable, over towards the hospital."

A look of amaze and stupefaction was settling on Perry's face. Now for the first time he recalled Mrs. Lawrence's intimations with regard to the doctor, and his connection with the signal-lights. Now for the first time it occurred to him that the secret of those cavalry hoof-prints at the gate was that no ranchman, but an officer of the garrison had been the means of leaving them there. Now for the first time it flashed upon him that the Englishman's astonishment and concern on hearing of those hoof-tracks indicated that the story of a mystery at Dunraven in which the doctor was connected amounted to something more than garrison rumor. Now for the first time an explanation occurred to him of the singular conduct of the horseman who had dodged him by crossing the Monee. Never in his young life had he known the hour when he was ashamed or afraid to look any man in the eye. It stung him to think that here at Rossiter, wearing the uniform of an honorable profession, enjoying the trust and confidence of all his fellows, was a man who had some secret enterprise of which he dared not speak and of whose discovery he stood in dread. There could be little doubt that the elusive stranger was Dr. Quin, and that there was grave reason for the rumors of which Mrs. Lawrence had vaguely told him.

For a moment he sat, dazed and irresolute, Nolan impatiently pawing the turf the while; then, far across the prairie and down the valley there came floating, quick and spirited, though faint with distance, the notes of the cavalry trumpet sounding "right, front into line." He looked up, startled.

"They're out at battalion drill, sir," said the sergeant. "They marched out just as I left stables."

"Just my infernal luck again!" gasped Perry, as he struck spur to Nolan and sent him tearing up the slope: "I might have known I'd miss it!"

V.

That evening a group of cavalry officers came sauntering back from stables, and as they reached the walk in front of officers' row a dark-featured, black-bearded, soldierly-looking captain separated himself from the rest and entered the colonel's yard. The commanding officer happened to be seated on his veranda at the moment, and in close

confabulation with Dr. Quin. Both gentlemen ceased their talk as the captain entered, and then rose from their seats as he stepped upon the veranda floor.

"Good-evening, Stryker," said the colonel, cheerily. "Come in and have a seat. The doctor and I were just wondering if we could not get you to take a hand at whist to-night."

"I shall be glad to join you, sir, after parade. I have come in to ask permission to send a sergeant and a couple of men, mounted, down the Monee. One of my best men is missing."

"Indeed! Who is that? Send the men, of course."

"Sergeant Gwynne, sir. The first time I ever knew him to miss a duty."

"Your stable-sergeant, too? That is unusual. How long has he been gone?"

"Since battalion drill this morning. He was on hand when the men were saddling, and asked permission to take his horse out for exercise and ride down the valley a few miles. I said yes, never supposing he would be gone after noon roll-call; and we were astonished when he failed to appear at stables. Perry says he met him two miles out."

"The two culprits!" said the colonel, laughing. "Poor Perry is down in the depths again. He rode up to me with such a woebegone look on his face at drill this morning that I could hardly keep from laughing in front of the whole line. Even the men were trying hard not to grin: they knew he had turned up just in the nick of time to save himself an 'absent.' What do you suppose can have happened to Gwynne?"

"I cannot imagine, sir, and am inclined to be worried. He would never willingly overstay a pass; and I fear some accident has happened."

"Is he a good rider?" asked the doctor.

"None better in the regiment. He is a model horseman, in fact, and, though he never alludes to nor admits it, there is a general feeling among the men that he has been in the English cavalry service. Of course there is no doubt of his nationality: he is English to the backbone, and, I fancy, has seen better days."

"What made them think he had been in the cavalry service abroad?"

"Oh, his perfect knowledge of trooper duties and management of horses. It took him no time to learn the drill, and he was a sergeant before he had been with me two years. Then, if you ever noticed, colonel," said Captain Stryker, appealing to his chief, "whenever Gwynne stands attention he always has the fingers of both hands extended and pointing down along the thigh, close against it,—so." And Stryker illustrated. "Now, you never see an American soldier do that; and I never saw it in any but English-trained soldiers. He has quit it somewhat of late, because the men told him it showed where he was drilled,—we have other English 'non-coms,' you know,—but for a long time I noticed that in him. Then he was enlisted in New York City, some four years ago, and all his things were of English make,—what he had."

"What manner of looking fellow is he?" asked the doctor. "I think I would have noted him had I seen him."

"Yes, you Englishmen are apt to look to one another," said the colonel, in reply, "and Gwynne is a particularly fine specimen. He has your eyes and hair, doctor, but hasn't had time to grow grizzled and bulky yet, as you and I have. One might say that you and the sergeant were from the same shire."

"That would help me very little, since I was only three years old when the governor emigrated," answered the doctor, with a quiet smile. "We keep some traces of the old sod, I suppose, but I've been a Yankee for forty years, and have never once set eyes on Merrie England in all that time.—Did the sergeant say where he wanted to go?" And the questioner looked up sharply.

"Nowhere in particular,—down the valley was all. I remember, though, that Mr. Parke said he seemed much exercised over the name of that ranch down the Monee,—I've forgotten what they call it.—Have you heard it, colonel?"

"Seems to me I have, but I've forgotten. You have, doctor, have you not?"

"Heard what, colonel?"

"The name of that ranch down the Monee,—an English ranch, they tell me, about seven miles away."

"Oh, yes!—that one! They call it Dunraven Ranch.—Did the sergeant take any of the hounds with him, captain? It occurs to me he might have been running a coyote or a rabbit, and his horse have stumbled and fallen with him. There is no end of prairie-dog holes down that way."

"No, the dogs are all in. I wouldn't be surprised if he had gone to the ranch. That's an English name, and they are all Englishmen down there, I hear. Very possibly that is the solution. They may have tempted him to stay with English hospitality; though it would astonish me if he yielded. I'll tell the men to inquire there first, colonel, and will go and send them now." And, bowing to his commander, Captain Stryker turned and left the porch.

The doctor rose, thrust his hands deep in his pockets, paced slowly to the southern end of the veranda, and gazed down the distant, peaceful valley, an anxious cloud settling on his brow. The colonel resumed once more the newspaper he had dropped upon the floor. After a moment Dr. Quin came slowly back, stood in front of the entrance a few seconds looking irresolutely at the soldier sprawled at full length in his reclining-chair, stepped towards him with a preparatory clearing of his throat as though about to speak, and then, suddenly and helplessly abandoning the idea, he plunged down the short flight of steps, hurried out of the gate, and disappeared around the fence-corner in the direction of the hospital. Immersed in his paper, the colonel never seemed to note that he had gone; neither did he note the fact that two ladies were coming down the walk. Possibly the vines clustering thickly all over the front of his veranda were responsible for this latter failure on his part, since it took more than a newspaper, ordinarily, to render the gallant dragoon insensible to the approach of the

opposite sex. They saw *him*, of course, despite the shrouding vines, and, with perfectly justifiable appreciation of the homage due them, were mutually resolved that he should come out of that reclining pose and make his bow in due form. No words were necessary between them. The understanding was tacit, but complete.

The soft swish of trailing skirt being insufficient to attract his attention as they arrived nearly opposite the shaded veranda, a silvery peal of laughter broke the stillness of the early evening. Mrs. Belknap's laugh was delicious,—soft, melodious, rippling as a canary's song, and just as spontaneous. Neither lady had said anything at the moment that was incentive of merriment; but if Mrs. Lawrence had given utterance to the quaintest, oddest, most whimsical conceit imaginable, Mrs. Belknap's laugh could not have been more ready, and her great, dark eyes shot a sidelong glance to note the effect. Down went the paper, and up, with considerable propping from his muscular arms, came the burly form of the post commander. Two sweet, smiling faces beamed upon him through an aperture in the leafy screen, and Mrs. Belknap's silvery voice hailed him in laughing salutation:

"Did we spoil your siesta, colonel? How *can* I make amends? You see, you were so hidden by the vines that no one would dream of your being there in ambush."

"Oh, indeed, I assure you I wasn't asleep," answered the colonel, hastily. "Won't you come in, ladies, and sit here in the shade awhile? You've been calling, I suppose?"

"Yes,—calling, on the entire social circle of Fort Rossiter. Congratulate us, colonel: we have actually accomplished the feat of visiting every woman in society. We have made the rounds of the garrison. We owe no woman anything,—beyond a grudge or two,—and it has only taken forty-five minutes, despite the fact that everybody was at home."

"Well, come in, Mrs. Belknap; *do* come in, Mrs. Lawrence. I assure you that, though everybody must have been enchanted to see you, nobody is half as glad as I am. You must be tired after such a round of visits." And the colonel plunged heavily down the steps and hospitably opened the gate.

"We thought we would stroll around until parade," said Mrs. Lawrence, hesitatingly, "and then sit down and watch it somewhere."

"No place better than this," promptly answered the colonel. "You can sit behind the vines on that side and see, or, what we would infinitely prefer, sit here at the entrance and be seen. Meantime, I've been unpacking some photograph-albums this afternoon, and you can amuse yourselves with those while I put on my harness. Come!"

The colonel's collection of photographs was something the ladies had already heard a great deal of. One of the most genial and popular officers in the army, he had gathered together several large albums full of pictures of prominent men and attractive and distinguished women,—not only those with whom he had been associated in his long years of service, but men eminent in national and state affairs, and women leaders in society in many a gay metropolis. Both the ladies had hoped to see this famous collection the evening before, but the colonel

had not then unpacked the albums, and they were disappointed. Now, however, the prospect was indeed alluring, and neither could resist. When the first call sounded for parade a few moments after, and the commanding officer was getting himself into his full-dress uniform, the two pretty heads were close together, and two pairs of very lovely eyes—one dark and deep and dangerous, the other a clear and honest gray—were dilating over page after page of photographed beauty. There was no need to puzzle over the identity of the originals: under each picture the thoughtful colonel had carefully written the name and address. Absorbed in this treat, they could barely afford time to look up and smile their thanks as the colonel passed, clanking forth at the sounding of adjutant's call, and were too completely engrossed in their delightful occupation to notice what took place at parade.

The long, slender line had formed,—the infantry companies on the right and left flanks, their neat and tasteful dress of blue and white contrasting favorably with the gaudy yellow plumage of the four dismounted troops of the cavalry. Company after company had taken the statuesque pose of "parade rest" and its captain faced to the front again, the adjutant was just about moving to his post on the prolongation of the front rank, and the colonel settling back into the conventional attitude of the commanding officer, when from outside the rectangular enclosure of the parade-ground—from somewhere beyond the men's barracks—there came sudden outcry and commotion. There were shouts, indistinguishable at first, but excited and startling. Some of the men in ranks twitched nervously and partially turned their heads, as though eager to look behind them and see what was wrong; whereat stern voices could be heard in subdued but potent censure: "Keep your eyes to the front, there, Sullivan!" "Stand fast, there, centre of Third Company!" The guard, too, paraded in front of its quarters some distance behind the line, was manifestly disturbed, and the voice of the sergeant could be heard giving hurried orders. Every man in the battalion seemed at the same instant to arrive at one of two conclusions,—prisoners escaping, or fire over at the stables,—and all eyes were fixed on the imperturbable form of the commanding officer, as though waiting the signal from him to break and go to the rescue. But there the colonel stood, placid, calm, and apparently utterly unconscious of the distant yet nearing clamor. The adjutant hesitated a moment before proceeding further, and glanced appealingly at his chief; whereupon there came from the blue and gold and yellow statue out on the parade, in half-reproachful tones, the quiet order, "Go on!" and the adjutant, recalled to his senses and with evident expression of his sentiments to the effect that if others could stand it *he* could, brusquely turned his head towards the band and growled, "Sound off!" The boom and crash of drum and cymbal and the blare of brazen throats drowned for a moment the sound of the turmoil without. The next thing the battalion heard, or saw, was a riderless horse tearing full tilt out on the parade and sweeping in a big circle from the right of the line down towards the point where the colonel stood. Following him came a pair of Cheyenne scouts, their ponies scampering in pursuit, but veering off the green as their riders realized that they were intruding.

on the ceremony of the day. Relieved of his pursuers, the fugitive speedily settled down into a lunging trot, and with streaming mane and tail, with head and ears erect, with falling bridle-rein and flapping stirrups, he circled rapidly the open space between the colonel and the line of battle, then came trotting back along the front, as though searching in the stolid rank of bearded faces for the friends he knew. Officer after officer he passed in review until he came to Stryker's troop, posted on the right of the cavalry, and there, with a neigh of recognition, he fearlessly trotted up to the captain's outstretched hand. Another minute, and two men fell out and made a temporary gap in the rank; through this a sergeant file-closer extended his white glove, relieved the captain of his charge, and led the panting steed away. The men retook their places; the captain again resumed his position in front of the centre of his company, dropped the point of his sabre to the ground, and settled back into "parade rest;" the band went on thundering down the line, countermarched, and came back to its post on the right, making the welkin ring with the triumphant strains of "Northern Route," the trumpets pealed the "retreat," the adjutant stalked his three yards to the front, faced fiercely to the left and shouted his resonant orders down the line, three hundred martial forms sprang to attention, and the burnished arms came to the "carry" with simultaneous crash, ranks were opened with old-time precision, the parade "presented" to the colonel with all due formality, the manual was executed just as punctiliously as though nothing unusual had happened; first-sergeants reported, orders were published, parade formally dismissed; the line of officers marched solidly to the front, halted, and made its simultaneous salute to the colonel, who slowly raised and lowered his white-gloved hand in recognition; and then, and not till then, was any one allowed to speak of what was uppermost in every mind,—that Sergeant Gwynne's horse had come in without him, and that the animal's right flank was streaming with blood.

Ten minutes later, Lieutenant Perry, in riding-dress, came hurrying down to the colonel's quarters, where two or three officers were now gathered at the gate. The ladies had put aside the albums, and with anxious faces were scanning the little group, as though striving to gauge from their gestures and expression the extent of the calamity or the possible degree of danger. But Mrs. Lawrence looked fairly startled when her husband's voice was heard for the first time above the general hum of consultation:

"Colonel Brainard, Mr. Perry is coming, I see, and I presume there is no time to be lost. You have asked if none of us who were stationed here ever visited the ranch, and the answer was no. May I suggest that Dr. Quin could perhaps tell something of its inhabitants?"

"Where is the doctor?" asked the colonel, turning suddenly. "Orderly, go and give my compliments to the post surgeon and say I wish to see him here a moment.—All ready, Perry? You have made quick work of it."

"All ready, sir. At least, I will be the moment my horse gets here. There go the men running to the stables now."

"Captain Stryker will send a sergeant and four men to report to

you, and you are to go direct to Dunraven Ranch. The rest of the troop, with the Cheyennes, will scout the prairie to the east and south. 'Twill soon be too dark to trail, but three of the Indians are going back on the horse's track as far as they can. The adjutant is writing a note to the proprietor of the ranch,—I don't know his name—"

"His name is Maitland, sir."

"Is it? Have you been there?"

"I've been around one end of it, outside, but nowhere near the buildings. It's all fenced in, sir, and the gates kept locked."

"What an incomprehensible proceeding for Texas! Wait a moment while I speak to Mr. Farnham: he's writing here at my desk. —Gentlemen, come in on the porch and sit down, will you not?"

But they excused themselves, and hastened away to remove their full dress. Captain Lawrence had no need to call his wife. She bade her companion good-evening, thanked the colonel with a smiling glance for the pleasure the photographs had given her, and added a word of earnest hope that they might find the sergeant uninjured. Then she joined her husband, and together they walked quickly away. Mrs. Belknap and Mr. Perry were left for the moment alone.

"Can you walk home with me?" she asked, in her low, modulated tones, the great, heavily-lashed, swimming dark eyes searching his face. "I have not seen you since they broke in upon our talk last evening, and there is something I want to ask you."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Belknap, but I'm on duty, you see," was the young fellow's answer as he gave a tug to the strap of his cartridge-belt. "Can't you ask me here?"

"How can I?"—and the eyes were full of pathetic disappointment,— "when they may come out any moment? You did not finish telling me about—about the tassel last night. I believe you were glad when they interrupted us. Were you not?"

"Nonsense, Mrs. Belknap! I was having too good a time,—lots of fun."

"Yes," was the reproachful answer, "that is what it was—to you, —mere fun. And now you are going away again, after promising to come in this evening."

"I have to go, Mrs. Belknap. Why, I *want* to go. Haven't you heard what has happened,—about Sergeant Gwynne?"

"Oh, yes, it is your duty, of course; but how unlucky!" And the pretty face was drooping with its weight of disappointment and sadness. She leaned against the railing near his gauntlet-covered hand, the dark eyes pensively downcast, the dark lashes sweeping her soft, flushing cheek. "And to-morrow you are on guard," she presently continued.

"Yes, unless some one has to go on for me,—in case we are not back in the morning in time."

"Then it's good-by, I suppose," she said, lifting her eyes once more to his. "After to-morrow there will be little chance of seeing you. Mrs. Page will be here by that time."

Mr. Perry looked at his fair companion with a glance that told of much perturbation of spirit. Mrs. Page was an old and cherished

friend of Mrs. Belknap's,—so the latter had always said,—and now she was coming to visit her from a station in the Indian Territory. Just why *her* coming should prevent his seeing Mrs. Belknap or her seeing him was more than the tall subaltern could understand. On the brink of an unpardonable solecism, on the very ragged edge of a blundering inquiry, he was saved—in her estimation—by the sudden return of the orderly and the reappearance of the colonel.

"I've been to the hospital, sir, and to the doctor's quarters: he's not there. They say that's him, sir, riding off yonder." And the orderly pointed to a faint speck just visible in the waning twilight, far away southeastward beyond the Monee.

VI.

Twilight still hovered over the broad expanse of prairie when Lieutenant Perry and his little party, after a brisk canter down the valley, reached the barbed enclosure of Dunraven, and the young commander led unhesitatingly to the gate-way on the northern line. A sergeant of his troop and two private soldiers were his escort at the moment; a third man, by direction of Colonel Brainard, had been sent at the gallop in pursuit of the distant speck which the orderly had pronounced to be Dr. Quin, and the instructions which this messenger bore were to the effect that the post surgeon should ride by the most direct route and join Lieutenant Perry at the north gate of the ranch. In the few minutes which elapsed between the announcement of the doctor's departure on his solitary and unexpected ride and the arrival of the little mounted escort, Perry had time to tell the colonel something of the situation down the Monee and to make a rough sketch of the enclosure and the distant buildings. The direction taken by the doctor, up to the moment when the black speck disappeared from view in the waning light, would be very apt to lead him, if he rode far enough, to some point on the wire fence which spanned the western limit of Dunraven; but that point would be at least five or six miles south of the valley. Possibly there was no gate-way north of that,—certainly no trail was visible on the prairie,—but the more Mr. Perry thought of the matter as he rode away the more was he satisfied that somewhere far down that western line there was an entrance where Dr. Quin, at least, had the "open sesame." All the grazing thus far had been done north of the Monee; all the hunting and coursing, too, had been found best in every way far out to the north and east of the post; and so it happened that no one of the —th seemed to have acquired any knowledge of the English ranch. What the local infantry command was able to tell of it was purely hearsay. None of the officers had ever penetrated the charmed enclosure, and no one of the soldiers was known to have done so. Perry remembered hearing that the Eleventh while stationed there had made some scouts and expeditions out to the south, and that some of these had completely circled the broad lands of the estate, finding well-travelled roads leading from its southern boundaries to the settlements two days' journey farther towards the Gulf; but nowhere was there open or unguarded gap.

Cattle with the Dunraven brand roamed the breaks and prairies far away towards the eastern streams, and crossed even the broad trail over which the great Texas "drive" of "long-horns," year after year, passed up across the valley of the Washita. Other cattle, of choicer breed, were carefully herded within the wire enclosure; but, thanks to the vigilance of the manager and the exertions of his few skilled assistants, none of their wandering chattels seemed ever to venture up-stream towards the fort, and all excuse for a visit there was apparently guarded against. These meagre points he had gathered from the remarks of one or two officers who had come to see him off, and, ignorant of his morning expedition, to offer suggestions as to his best course.

His orders were, in case nothing was seen or heard of Sergeant Gwynne while on the way thither, to enter the enclosure and make inquiries at the ranch itself. Meantime, the Cheyenne scouts had been hastily summoned from their lodges along the Monee just above the post and sent scurrying forth upon the prairie to trail the horse's foot-prints and so work back as far as possible before darkness interposed. Captain Stryker, too, and a dozen of his best men, had mounted and ridden forth in long, scattered line across the eastern plain; and these parties were all five miles out from the post before nightfall fairly hid them from view.

One thing the sergeant had to tell Mr. Perry which confirmed him in the belief that the sooner they got to Dunraven the quicker they would be at the scene of their comrade's mishap, whatever that might prove to be. He had had no time himself to visit the stables and examine the wounds on the horse's flank, but as they rode away from Rossiter he turned in the saddle and called the non-commissioned officer to his side.

"What sort of wound is it, sergeant, that made that horse bleed so,—bullet or knife?"

"It doesn't look like either, sir. There are several of them,—jagged scratches in the shoulder and along the flank, like thorns or nails——"

"Or barbed wire?" suggested the lieutenant, suddenly.

"Yes, sir, like as not; though we hadn't thought of that, not knowing of any fences hereabouts."

"You'll see fence enough presently. That's where we'll find Sergeant Gwynne, too. Let your horses out a little. I want to get there before dark, if possible."

It was dark in the timber, however, as they rode through and reined up at the gate-way. It would be half an hour at the very least, thought Perry, before the doctor could join them, if he came at all. It was by no means certain that the messenger had overtaken him, and, even if he had, was it probable that the doctor would be in great haste to come? His mysterious movements of the morning, his undoubted connection with the night-signals from the ranch, the fact that he had given his commanding officer no inkling whatever of these outside interests of his, all tended to make Perry distrustful of their post surgeon. He would not speak of it to a soul, or hint at the possibility of such a thing, until he had evidence that was indisputable, but the young officer was sorely perplexed by these indications of some secret and

unlawful enterprise on the part of their new comrade, and he doubted his sympathy in the mission on which they had been hurried forth.

Dismounting to examine the gate while still pondering this matter over in his mind, Perry found it locked as securely as he had left it in the morning. The sergeant and his men dismounted, too, at a low-spoken word from their officer, and stood at the heads of their panting horses, looking in silent surprise at the strong and impervious barrier that crossed their track.

"The gate is locked and the fence impassable, sergeant," said Mr. Perry. "We cannot get our horses through or over unless we hack down a post or two. You can't cut such wire as this with any tool we've got. I'll leave Nolan here with you and go on to the ranch on foot: it lies about half a mile to the south. If the doctor comes, he can follow me. If I do not come or send back in half an hour from this, you three come after me, for I'll need you."

With that, slowly and carefully, and not without a muttered mal-ediction on the stinging barbs, Mr. Perry wriggled through between the middle wires, and finally stood within the enclosure, readjusting his waist-belt and holster. Then he took his revolver from its leathern case, carefully tried the hammer and cylinder, saw that each chamber was loaded, and turned once more to the sergeant.

"Your pistols all right?"

"All right, sir,—fresh loaded when we started."

"I don't know that they'll be necessary at all, sergeant, but this is a queer place, from what I've heard and the little I've seen. Keep your eyes and ears open. Captain Stryker and some of the men may come down into the valley if they find no trace of Gwynne up on the prairie. Watch for the doctor, too."

Then, through the deepening twilight he strode, following the trail that led southward up the slopes. Five minutes' brisk walk along the springy turf brought him to the crest and in view of the lights at the ranch-buildings, still some six or seven hundred yards away. All through the eastern sky the stars were peeping forth, and even through the gleam of the twilight in the west two brilliant planets shone like molten gold. All was silence and peace on every hand, and, but for those guiding, glimmering lights at the south, all would have told of desolation. Behind him in the valley waited his faithful men. Far beyond the Monee, out on the northern prairie, he knew that comrades were scouring the face of the earth in search of their missing brother. Up the stream, somewhere behind them, the Cheyennes were patiently trailing the hoof-tracks as long as the light should last; he knew that search must be at an end by this time, and that some of their number, at least, would be riding down to join his men. Whoever found the sergeant was to fire three shots in air: the signal could be heard a long way in that intense stillness, and that signal was to recall the searching-parties. Every step brought him deeper into the darkness of the night, yet nearer and nearer those twinkling lights ahead. Already he could distinguish those in the main building, the homestead, from those more distant still, in the store-rooms and office. Far over among the stables and corrals he heard the deep baying of hounds, and he wondered if

it was to be his luck to encounter any enterprising watch-dogs. An English bull-terrier would be a lively entertainer, thought he, with instinctive motion towards the flap of his holster; and it would be a wonder if a ranch that surrounded itself with fifty miles of barbed wire fencing were not further envired by a pack of watch-dogs of the most approved and belligerent breed. Once having passed the distant barrier of that gate on the Monee, however, his way was unimpeded, and, to all appearance, utterly unmarked; he had arrived within fifty yards of the foremost building, the homestead, before he was brought to a halt. Then he stopped short, surprised, half credulous, and all attention, listening to the "concord of sweet sounds" that came floating from the open casement somewhere along the east front of the big, gloomy house.

"One part of the story verified, by Jove! It's a piano,—and well played, too."

Full a minute he stood there listening. Perry was a dancer whose nimble feet moved blithely to any measured, rhythmic strains, and a soldier whose soul was stirred by martial music, but with Chopin and Mendelssohn, Bach and Rubinstein, he had but slight acquaintance. That any one should be playing a piano here on the borders of the Llano Estacado was in itself sufficient cause for wonderment; that the invisible performer was playing—and playing with exquisite taste and feeling—one of the loveliest of the "*Lieder ohne Worte*," the Spring Song, was a fact that conveyed no added astonishment to his soul: he never knew it until one sweet night long after.

However, matters more pressing than music demanded Mr. Perry's attention just here. He had reached Dunraven, after all. Neither dog nor man had challenged. Once within those barbed and frowning barriers, all the encircling objects spoke of security and rest. Far away towards the corrals he heard the sound of voices in jolly conversation; a rich, melodious laugh rang out on the cool evening air; he heard some one shouting genial good-night to somebody else, and then the slam of a distant door. Presently a light popped out from a window in what he believed to be a storehouse, and all was still again. Even the piano had ceased. Now was his time, thought Perry; and so, boldly mounting the steps, he stood upon a dark portico and strode to the black shadow in the wall before him where he knew the main door-way must be. It was his intention to knock or ring. Up-stairs dim lights were shining through the open windows, but on this front of the ground-floor all was darkness. His gauntleted hand felt all the face of the door in search of knob or knocker, but nothing of the kind was there; neither was there such a thing on either door-post. Just as he decided to hammer with his clinched fist, the piano began again. He waited for a pause, but none came. This time the music was vehement and spirited, and no banging of his on oaken door-way would be audible against such rivalry. Uncertain what to do, he concluded to reconnoitre the eastern front. A few steps brought him to the corner, and there lay the veranda before him, bathed at its farther end in a flood of light that streamed from one opened venetian window, and through this curtained aperture poured the grand tones of the

melody. "That fellow can rattle more music out of a piano than any man I ever heard," muttered Mr. Perry to himself, as he strode down the wooden gallery. "Wonder if it's that boss cow-puncher I met this morning." Another moment, and he stood at the open window, rooted to the spot, and with his frank blue eyes fairly starting from their sockets in amazement at the sight that met them, all unprepared.

Across a spacious room, hung with rich curtains; carpeted with costly rugs of Oriental make, furnished with many a cosey chair and couch, and tables covered with dainty *bric-à-brac*, and shelves with tempting books, lighted by several large and beautiful astral lamps, some with colored shades of crimson and gold and delicate tint of blue, there stood close to the opposite wall a large piano of the class known as the "grand," rare enough among the railway towns west of the Mississippi States, but utterly unlooked for here, a week's long march from the nearest of the Texan railways. That in itself were sufficient cause for much surprise, notwithstanding the measure of preparation he had had in Mrs. Lawrence's remarks.

The sight that wellnigh took his breath away was something far more than the interior of a luxurious and beautifully-appointed room. *Nothing* that had been said or hinted prepared him in the faintest degree for the apparition, facing him, seated at the piano, of a performer utterly unlike the "cow-puncher" whom he had met in the morning. The "fellow" now bending over the key-board was a young, exquisitely fair, and graceful woman. Even as he stood there in the full glare of the parlor lights, she lifted up a pair of soft, shaded, lustrous eyes and saw him.

The music stopped with sudden shock. Tannhäuser was undone. The firm, white, shapely hands fell nerveless in her lap; a pallor as of faintness shot over the wild-eyed face, only to be instantly succeeded by a flush that surged up to the very brows. Startled she might have been for an instant; scared,—not a bit of it! One instant only of hesitation, then she rose and swept gallantly forward to meet him.

Instinctively Perry's hand went up to the visor of his forage-cap and bared the bright, curling crop of hair. Speechless with amaze, he could only bow before her and wait her question; but it was a moment before she could speak. Brave as she was, the sudden apparition of a stranger staring in upon her solitude from an open casement was a shock that served to paralyze the vocal cords. He could see that she was making gallant effort to control the tremor that had seized upon her and to inquire the purpose of his coming. He could see, too, that the sight of the uniform had reassured her, and that there was neither indignation nor displeasure in her beautiful eyes. Reserve, of course, he expected.

"Did you wish to see any one?" was finally the form her question took; and Perry had time to comment to himself, "English, by Jove!" before he answered,—

"I did; but let me first ask your pardon for this intrusion. I had no idea there was a woman at Dunraven. My knocking at the front brought no answer, and, hearing the piano, I followed the veranda. Believe me, I am as surprised as you could possibly have been."

Perry's voice was something greatly in his favor. It was modulated and gentle when in conversation, and with even a caressing tone about it when he spoke to women. Evidently the sound was not unwelcome to this one. She stood erect, her fingers interlacing as she clasped her hands in front of her and looked him well over with her brave eyes. The color ebbed and flowed through the creamy whiteness of her face, but the roses were winning every moment,—the red roses of the house of Lancaster.

"And—you wished to see—whom?" she presently asked, with courtesy in every word.

"Why, I hardly know," answered Perry, with a smile that showed his white teeth gleaming through the curling blond moustache. "A sergeant of my troop has been missing since morning. His horse came back to the fort just as we were on parade at sunset, bleeding and without his rider. We have searching-parties out all over the prairie, and I was ordered to come here to the ranch to make inquiries."

She hesitated a moment,—thinking.

"My father is at home, but I fear he is not well enough to see you. Mr. Ewen is with him, and he might know. Will you—would you step in one moment, and I will go and ask?"

"Thank you very much. I wish you would not trouble yourself. I presume I can go over to those stable-buildings, or wherever it is the men sleep: they would be most apt to know if our sergeant has been seen."

"Oh, no! it is no trouble; besides, they are all asleep over there by this time, I fancy. They have to be out so very early, don't you know?"

But Perry had stepped inside even as he offered to go elsewhere,—a fact that the girl had not been slow to notice, for a quizzical little shadow of a smile hovered for an instant at the corners of her pretty mouth. "Pray sit down," she said, as she vanished into an adjoining room, leaving Ned Perry standing gazing after her, spell-bound.

He listened to the swish of her trailing skirts through the dimly-lighted room beyond, through an invisible hall-way, and then to the quick pit-a-pat of her feet up some uncarpeted stairway. He heard her moving quickly, lightly, along the corridor of the upper story until the foot-falls were lost at the rear of the house, then a distant tap upon a door-way, and a soft voice, barely audible, calling, "Papa." He heard her speak again, as though in response to inquiry from within; he heard her raise her voice, as though to repeat an answer to a previous question, and this time her words were distinct. "An officer from the fort," she announced; and then followed sensation.

He heard a door quickly opened; he heard men's voices in low, eager, excited talk; he heard her sweet tones once more, as though in expostulation, saying something about the sergeant, lost or wounded, and they were merely inquiring for him; he heard a stern, harsh injunction of "Silence! that will do!" some quick, hurrying footsteps, a man's spurred boots descending some staircase at the back of the house, a colloquy aloft in fainter tones, and then—closing doors and silence. He waited five—ten minutes, and still no one came; but the murmur of voices in subdued but earnest controversy was again audible

on the second floor, and at last a door was opened and he heard the same stern tones that had commanded her silence before, and this time they said,—

"That is entirely my affair! I will see the gentleman myself, and let him know my opinion of this impudent and—and—burglarious intrusion."

"Whew!" whistled Mr. Perry to himself at sound of these menacing words. "This is bearding the lion in his den with a vengeance! Now trot out your 'Douglas in his hall,' and let's see what it all means. I've seen the girl, anyhow, and he can't take *that* back, even if he turns me out."

He heard a heavy step, accented by the sharp, energetic prodding of a cane; it came slowly along the hall, slowly and majestically down the stairs, slowly into the lower front room, and presently there loomed forth from the darkness into the broad glare of the astrals at the hanging *portières* the figure of a tall, gray-haired, spectacled, slimly-built, and fragile-looking Englishman, erect as pride and high spirit could hold a man against the ravages of age and rheumatism; sharp, stern, and imperious of mood, as every glance and every feature plainly told; vehement and passionate, unless twitching lips and frowning brows and angry, snapping eyes belied him; a man who had suffered much, unless the deep lines and shadows under eyes and mouth meant nothing but advancing years; a man who entered full of wrath and resentment at this invasion of his privacy,—this forcing of his guarded lines; and yet—a gentleman, unless Ned Perry's instincts were all of little worth.

The young soldier had been standing by a centre-table, coolly scanning the pictures on the walls, and determining to present a rather exaggerated picture of nonchalance as reward for the hostile language of the proprietor of Dunraven. He expected to hear an outburst of invective when that gentleman reached the room; but no sooner had he passed the *portière* than he halted short, and Mr. Perry, turning suddenly, was amazed at the pale, startled, yet yearning look in his quivering face. The moment the young man confronted him there came as sudden a change. It was with evident effort that he controlled himself, and then, after brief searching study of Perry's face, accosted him,—coldly and with sarcastic emphasis:

"To what circumstance do I owe the honor of this intrusion?"

"I regret you so consider it, Mr. Maitland,—as I believe you to be——" The old gentleman bowed with stately dignity. "One of our men, a sergeant, rode down this way quite early this morning and failed to return. His horse came back, bleeding, at sunset, and we feared some accident or trouble. Searching-parties are out all over the prairies, and the colonel ordered me to inquire here."

"Does your colonel take us for banditti here, and ascribe your desertions and accidents to our machinations?"

"Far from it, sir, but rather as a hospitable refuge to which the injured man had been conveyed," answered Perry, with a quiet smile, determined to thaw the *hauteur* of Dunraven's lord if courtesy of manner could effect it.

"He is utterly mistaken, then," answered the Englishman, "and I resent—I resent, sir, this forcing of my gates after the explicit understanding we had last year. As a soldier I presume you had to obey your orders; but I beg you to tell your colonel that his order was an affront to me personally, in view of what has passed between us."

"Nothing has passed between you, Mr. Maitland," answered Perry, a little tartly now. "We have reached Fort Rossiter only within the last fortnight, and know nothing whatever of your understandings with previous commanders. Permit me to ask you one question, and I will retire. Have you heard anything of our sergeant?"

"Nothing, sir. I would hardly be apt to hear, for my people here are enjoined to keep strictly to our limits, and all we ask of our neighbors is that they keep to theirs. I presume you have destroyed my fences, sir, in order to effect an entrance."

"Upon my word, Mr. Maitland, you make me rather regret that I did not; but I had the decency to respect what I had happened to hear of your wishes, and so left my horse and my men outside, and footed it a good half-mile in the dark——"

"Ah! that sounds very like it!" replied Mr. Maitland, with writhing lips, for at this moment there came the dull thunder of rapidly-advancing hoof-beats, and before either man could speak again three troopers with a led horse—all four steeds panting from their half-mile race—reined up in front of the eastern portico in the full glare of the lights, and the sergeant's voice was heard eagerly hailing his lieutenant.

"My luck again!" groaned Perry. "I told them to come in half an hour if they didn't hear from me, and of course they came."

VII.

For a moment there was silence in the brightly-illuminated room. With flushed face and swollen veins and twitching, clutching hands, old Maitland stood there glaring at the young officer. Before Perry could speak again, however, and more fully explain the untoward circumstance, there came a rush of hurrying footsteps without, and the sound of excited voices. The next minute they heard an eager, angry challenge, and Perry recognized the voice of the overseer or manager whom he had met in the morning.

"What do you fellows want here?" was his brusque and loud inquiry as he sprang from the piazza and stood confronting the sergeant, who was quietly seated in the saddle, and the question was promptly echoed by three or four burly men who, in shirt-sleeves and various styles of undress, came tumbling in the wake of their leader and stood now a menacing group looking up at the silent troopers.

If there be one thing on earth that will stir an Irishman's soul to its inmost depths and kindle to instant flame the latent heat of his pugnacity, it is just such an inquiry in the readily recognized accent of the hated "Sassenach." Perry recognized the danger in a flash, and, springing through the open casement, interposed between the hostile parties.

"Not a word, Sergeant Leary. Here, Mr. Manager, these men simply obeyed orders, and I am responsible for any mistake. No harm was intended——"

"Harm!" broke in one of the ranchmen, with a demonstratively loud laugh. "Harm be blowed! What harm could you do, I'd like to know? If the master'll only say the word, we'd break your heads in a minute."

"Quiet, now, Dick!" interposed the overseer; but the other hands growled approval, and Perry's eyes flashed with anger at the insult. What reply he might have made was checked by the sight of Sergeant Leary throwing himself from the saddle and tossing his reins to one of the men. He knew well enough what that meant, and sprang instantly in front of him.

"Back to your horse, sir! Back, instantly!" for the sergeant's face was fierce with rage. "Mount, I say!" added the lieutenant, as the sergeant still hesitated, and even the sense of discipline could not keep the mounted troopers from a muttered word of encouragement. Slowly, wrathfully, reluctantly, the soldier obeyed, once turning furiously back as jeering taunts were hurled at him from among the ranchers, unrebuked by their manager. "Now move off with your men to the gate. Leave my horse, and wait for me there. Go!" added the young officer, sternly; and, with bitter mortification at heart and a curse stifled on his quivering lips, the Irishman turned his horse's head away and slowly walked him in the indicated direction.

"Now, Mr. Manager," said Perry, turning fiercely upon the younger Englishman, "I have done my best to restrain my men: do you look out for yours. You have allowed them to insult me and mine, and you may thank your stars that discipline prevailed with my people, though you have nothing of the kind here."

"Your men have cut down our fences, by your order, I presume," said the manager, coolly, "and it's lucky for them they got out of the way when they did. We have a right to protect our property and eject intruders, and——"

"I came here to inquire for a missing man,—a right even an Englishman cannot deny us on these prairies. We had excellent reason to believe him injured, and thought, not knowing you for the inhospitable gang you are, that he might have been carried in here for treatment: there *was* no other place. Your proprietor tells me he is not here. After what I've seen of your people, I have reason to be still more anxious about him. Scant mercy a single trooper would have had at their hands. Now I ask *you*, Do you know or have you heard of a cavalry soldier being around here during the day?"

Perry was standing holding his horse by the curb as he spoke, facing the parlor windows and confronting the angry group of ranchmen. Within, though nearer the window than he had left him, was the bent form of the owner of Dunraven, leaning on his cane and apparently impatiently striving to make himself heard as he came forward. Before the manager could answer, he was compelled to turn about and rebuke his men, two of whom were especially truculent and menacing. Finally he spoke:

"I have heard nothing, but I tell you frankly that if any of your men have been prowling around here it's more than probable some one has got hurt. Has there been any trouble to-day, men?" he asked.

"By God, there *will* be if this ranch isn't cleared in five minutes," was the only answer.

"Don't make an ass of yourself, Hoke," growled the manager. "They are going quick enough."

"I *am* going," said Perry, swinging lightly into saddle; "and mind you this, sir: I go with well-warranted suspicion that some of these bullies of yours have been responsible for the non-appearance of my stable-sergeant. If he is not found this night, you may confidently look for another visit. I say that to you also, Mr. Maitland; and you owe it to our forbearance that there has been no bloodshed here to-night."

Old Maitland's tremulous tones were heard but a second in reply when he was interrupted by a coarse voice from the crowd of ranchmen, by this time increased to nearly a dozen men. Some of them were gathering about Perry as he sat in the saddle, and an applauding echo followed the loud interruption,—

"Give the swell a lift, Tummy: 'twill teach him better manners."

Almost instantly Perry felt his right foot grasped and a powerful form was bending at the stirrup. He had heard of the trick before. Many a time has the London cad unhorsed the English trooper, taken unawares, by hurling him with sudden lift from below. But Perry was quick and active as a cat. Seat and saddle, too, were in his favor. He simply threw his weight on the left foot and his bridle-hand upon the pommel, let the right leg swing over the horse's back until released from the brawny hand, then back it came as he settled again in the saddle, his powerful thighs gripping like a vise; at the same instant, and before his assailant could duck to earth and slip out of the way, he had whipped out the heavy Colt's revolver and brought its butt with stunning crash down on the ranchman's defenceless head.

There was instant rush and commotion. In vain old Maitland feebly piped his protests from the veranda; in vain the overseer seized and held back one or two of the men and furiously called off the rest. Aided by the darkness which veiled them, the others made a simultaneous rush upon the young officer and sought to drag him from his plunging horse. Perry held his pistol high in air, threatening with the butt the nearest assailant, yet loath to use further force. He was still in the broad glare of the parlor lights,—a conspicuous mark; eager hands had grasped his bridle-rein at the very bit, and he could not break away; and then missiles began to fly about his devoted head, and unless he opened fire he was helpless. While two men firmly held Nolan by the curb, half a dozen others were hurling from the ambush of darkness a scattering volley of wooden billets and chunks of coal. He could easily have shot down the men who held him. It was sore temptation, for already he had been struck and stung by unseen projectiles; but just as the manager sprang forward and with vigorous cuffs induced the men to loose their hold on his rein, there came three horsemen charging full tilt back into the crowd, scattering the assailants right and left; and, this time unrebuked, Sergeant Leary leaped from

the saddle and with a rage of fierce delight pitched headlong into battle with the biggest ranchman in his way. And this was not all; for behind them at rapid trot came other troopers, and in a moment the open space was thronged with eager, wondering comrades,—full half of Stryker's company,—in whose overwhelming presence all thought of promiscuous combat seemed to leave the ranchmen. They slipped away in the darkness, leaving to their employers the embarrassment of accounting for their attack. Leary was still fuming with wrath and raging for further battle and shouting into the darkness fierce invective at the vanished head of his opponent. He turned on the overseer himself, and but for Perry's stern and sudden prohibition would have had a round with him, but was forced to content himself with the information conveyed to all within hearing that he'd "fight any tin min" the ranch contained if they'd only come out where the lieutenant couldn't stop him. The troopers were making eager inquiry as to the cause of all the trouble, and, fearing further difficulty, Perry promptly ordered the entire party to "fall in." Silence and discipline were restored in a moment, and as the platoon formed rank he inquired of a sergeant how they came to be there. The reply was that it had grown so dark on the prairie that further search seemed useless, Captain Stryker and most of the men had been drawn off by signals from the Cheyennes up the valley towards the post, and these men, who had been beyond Dunraven on the northern prairie, were coming back along the Monee trail when they saw the lights and heard voices over at the lower shore. There they found Leary, who was excited about something, and before they had time to ask he suddenly shouted, "They're killin' the lieutenant. Come on, boys!" and galloped off with his own party: so they followed. Perry quietly ordered them to leave a corporal and four men with him, and told the senior sergeant to march the others back to the post: he would follow in five minutes. Then he turned to the manager:

"You will have to put up with my keeping some of my men with me, in view of all the circumstances," he said, coldly. "But after this exhibition of lawlessness on the part of your people I do not propose to take any chances. I want to say to you that it is my belief that some of those ruffians you employ can tell what has become of our missing man, and that you will do well to investigate to-night. As to you, Mr. Maitland," he said, turning to the old gentleman, who had sunk into a low easy-chair, "much as I regret having disturbed your privacy and—that of the—ladies of your household, you will admit now that justice to my men and to the service demands that I should report my suspicions and my reception here to the commanding officer at Fort Rossiter."

There was no reply.

"I wish you good-night, sir," said Perry; but his eyes wandered in to the lighted parlor in search of a very different face and form,—and still there was no answer.

The manager came back upon the piazza and stepped rapidly towards them. Perry quickly dismounted and bent down over the crouching figure.

"Why, here!" he suddenly exclaimed, "your employer is faint, or—something's gone wrong."

"Hush!" was the low-spoken, hurried answer of the Englishman. "Just bear a hand, will you, and help me lift him to yonder sofa?"

Easily, between them, they bore the slight, attenuated form of the old man into the lighted parlor. A deathly pallor had settled on his face. His eyes were closed, and he seemed fallen into a deep swoon. Perry would have set a cushion under his head as they laid him down on a broad, easy couch, but the manager jerked it away, lowering the gray hairs to the very level of the back, so that the mouth gaped wide and looked like death itself.

"Just steady his head in that position one minute, like a good fellow. I'll be back in a twinkling," said the manager, as he darted from the room and leaped hurriedly up the hall stairway.

Perry heard him rap at a distant door apparently at the southwest angle of the big house. Then his voice was calling, "Mrs. Cowan! Mrs. Cowan! would you have the goodness to come down quick? the master's ill."

Then, before any answer could be given, another door opened aloft, and trailing skirts and light foot-falls came flashing down the stairway. Almost before he could turn to greet her, *she* was in the room again, and with quick, impulsive movement had thrown herself on her knees by his side.

"Oh, papa! *dear* father! I was afraid of this! Let me take his head on my arm, *so*," she hurriedly murmured; "and would you step in the other room and fetch me a little brandy? 'Tis there on the side-board."

Perry sprang to do her bidding, found a heavy decanter on the great oaken buffet, half filled a glass, and brought it with some water back to the lounge. She stretched forth her hand, and, thanking him with a grateful look from her sweet, anxious eyes, took the liquor and carried it carefully to her father's ashen lips.

"Can I not help you in some way? Is there no one I can call?" asked the young soldier, as he bent over her.

"Mr. Ewen has gone for her,—our old nurse, I mean. She does not seem to be in her room, and I fear she has gone over to her son's,—a young fellow at the storehouse. Mr. Ewen has followed by this time."

She dipped her slender white fingers in the water and sprinkled the forehead and eyelids of the prostrate man. A feeble moan, followed by a deep-drawn sigh, was the only response. More brandy poured into the gaping mouth seemed only to strangle and distress him. No sign of returning consciousness rewarded her effort.

"If Mrs. Cowan would only come! She has never failed us before; and we so lean upon her at such a time."

"Pray tell me which way to go. Surely I can find her," urged Perry.

"Mr. Ewen must be searching for her now, or he would have returned by this time; and I dread being alone. I have never been alone with father when he has had such a seizure."

Perry threw himself on his knees beside her, marvelling at the odd fate that had so suddenly altered all the conditions of his unlooked-for visit. He seized one of the long, tremulous hands that lay so nerveless on the couch, and began rapid and vigorous chafing and slapping. Somewhere he had read or heard of women being restored from fainting-spells by just such means. Why should it not prevail with the old man? He vaguely bethought him of burnt feathers, and looked about for the discarded pillow, wondering if it might not be a brilliant idea to cut it open and extract a handful and set it ablaze under those broad and eminently aristocratic nostrils. Happily, he was spared excuse for further experiment. He felt that life was returning to the hand he was so energetically grooming, and that feeble but emphatic protest against such heroic treatment was manifest.

"I think he's coming to," he said. "He's trying to pull away. Shall I keep on?"

"Yes, do! Anything rather than have him lie in this death-like swoon."

Obediently he clung to his prize, rubbing and chafing hard, despite increasing tug and effort. Then came another feeble, petulant moan, and the hollow eyes opened just as rapid foot-falls were heard on the veranda without and Mr. Ewen rushed breathless and ruddy-faced into the room.

"Where on earth can that woman have gone?" he panted. "I cannot find her anywhere. Is he better, Miss Gladys?"

"Reviving, I think, thanks to Mr.—thanks to you," she said, turning her eyes full upon the kneeling figure at her side and sending Perry's heart up into his throat with delight at the gratitude and kindness in her glance. She was striving with one hand to unfasten the scarf and collar at the old man's neck, but making little progress.

"Let me help you," eagerly said Perry. "That, at least, is more in my line." And somehow their fingers touched as he twisted at the stubborn knot. She drew her hand away then, but it was gently, not abruptly done, and he found time to note that too, and bless her for it.

"I hate to seem ungracious, you know, after all that's happened," said Mr. Ewen, "but I fear 'twill vex him awfully if he should find you in here when he comes to. He has had these attacks for some time past, and I think he's coming through all right. See?"

Old Maitland was certainly beginning to open his eyes again and look vacantly around him.

"Better leave him to Miss Gladys," said the overseer, touching the young fellow on the shoulder. Perry looked into her face to read her wishes before he would obey. A flush was rising to her cheek, a cloud settling about her young eyes, but she turned, after a quick glance at her father.

"I cannot thank you enough—now," she said, hesitatingly. "Perhaps Mr. Ewen is right. You—you deserve to be told the story of his trouble, you have been so kind. Some day you shall understand,—soon,—and not think unkindly of us."

"Indeed I do not now," he protested.

"And—whom are we to thank?—your name, I mean?" she timidly asked.

"I am Mr. Perry, of the —th Cavalry. We have only come to Fort Rossiter this month."

"And I am Miss Maitland. Some day I *can* thank you." And she held forth her long, slim hand. He took it very reverently and bowed over it, courtier-like, longing to say something that might fit the occasion; but before his scattered senses could come to him there was another quick step at the veranda, and a voice that sounded strangely familiar startled his ears:

"Gladys! What has happened?" And there, striding to the sofa with the steps of one assured of welcome and thoroughly at home in those strange precincts, came Dr. Quin.

VIII.

It was very late that night—nearly midnight—when the colonel, seated on his veranda and smoking a cigar, caught sight of a cavalry sergeant hurriedly passing his front gate. The main searching-parties had long since come home, unsuccessful; Lieutenant Perry had returned and made report that the people at Dunraven denied having seen or heard anything of Gwynne, that both proprietor and manager had treated his visit as an affront, and that he had had much difficulty in preventing a fracas between his men and a gang of rough fellows employed at the ranch, that finally Mr. Maitland had fallen back in a swoon, and that he had left him to the care of Dr. Quin, who arrived soon after the occurrence. The colonel had been greatly interested and somewhat excited over the details of Perry's adventure as that young gentleman finally gave them, for at first he was apparently averse to saying much about it. Little by little, however, all his conversation with Maitland and Ewen was drawn out, and the particulars of his hostile reception. The colonel agreed with him that there was grave reason to suspect some of the ranch-people of knowing far more of Sergeant Gwynne's disappearance than they would tell; and finally, seeing Perry's indisposition to talk further, and noting his preoccupation and apparent depression of spirits, he concluded that between fatigue and rasped nerves the young fellow would be glad to go to bed: so he said, kindly,—

"Well, I won't keep you, Perry: you're tired out. I'll sit up and see the doctor when he gets back and have a talk with him, then decide what steps we will take in the morning. I'll send a party down the valley at daybreak, anyway. May I offer you some whiskey, or a bottle of beer?"

"Thank you, colonel, I believe not to-night. A bath and a nap will set me all right, and I'll be ready to start out first thing in the morning. Good-night, sir."

But Colonel Brainard could not go to sleep. The garrison had "turned in," all except the guard and Captain Stryker. That officer had returned an hour after dark, and, getting a fresh horse, had started out again, going down the south side of the Monee to search the timber

with lanterns, the Cheyenne scouts having reported that Gwynne's horse had come up that way. He had been missed by Mr. Perry, who galloped up the trail to catch the platoon before it reached the post, and the colonel, now that he had heard the lieutenant's story, was impatiently awaiting his return. Up to within a few minutes of midnight, however, neither Stryker nor the doctor had come; dim lights were burning in both their quarters and at the guard-house. Everywhere else the garrison seemed shrouded in darkness. Catching sight of the yellow chevrons as they flitted through the flood of light that poured from his open door-way, the colonel instantly divined that this must be a sergeant of Stryker's troop going in search of his captain, and promptly hailed him:

"What is it, sergeant? Any news?"

"Yes, sir," answered the soldier, halting short. "Sergeant Gwynne's come back. I was going to the captain's to report."

"How did he get back. Isn't he injured?"

"He says he's had a fall, sir, and has been badly shaken up; but he walked in."

"Why, that's singular! Did he meet none of the searching-parties?—see none of their lights?"

"I can't make out, sir. He's a little queer,—doesn't want to talk, sir. He asked if his horse got in all right, and went and examined the scratches, and seemed troubled about them; but he doesn't say anything."

"Has he gone to the hospital?"

"No, sir: he'll sleep in his usual bunk at the stables to-night. He is only bruised and sore, he says. His face is cut and scratched and bound up in his handkerchief."

"Very well," said the colonel, after a moment's thought. "The captain will look into the matter when he gets back. You take your horse and ride down the south side of the valley and find the Cheyenne scouts. Captain Stryker is with them. Tell him the sergeant is home, safe."

"Very well, sir." And the trooper saluted, faced about, and disappeared in the darkness; while the colonel arose, and, puffing thoughtfully at his cigar, began pacing slowly up and down the piazza. He wished Stryker were home; he wished Captain Lawrence were officer of the day, and, so, liable to come out of his quarters again: he had heard just enough about that odd English ranch to make him feel disturbed and ill at ease. There had evidently been hostility between his predecessor and the proprietor of Dunraven, and very probably there had been bad blood between the men of the Eleventh Cavalry and the employees of the ranch: else why should there have been so unprovoked an assault upon the lieutenant this night? Then there were other things that gave him disquiet. Several officers had gathered upon the piazza during the early evening; they were mainly of his own regiment, but Captain Belknap and two of the infantry subalterns were there; Lawrence did not come. Of course the talk was about the incident of the evening, and, later, the rumors about Dunraven. All this was new to the cavalymen: they had heard, as yet, nothing at all,

and were not a little taken aback by the evident embarrassment and ominous silence of the three infantrymen, when the colonel turned suddenly on Belknap with the question,—

"By the way, captain, I had no time to ask Lawrence, and it really did not occur to me until after he had gone, but—what did he mean by saying that Dr. Quin could tell us something about the people at Dunraven?"

Belknap turned red and looked uncomfortably at his two comrades, as though appealing to them for aid. The younger officers, however, would say nothing at all, and the colonel promptly saw that he had stumbled on some piece of garrison gossip.

"Never mind," he said, with a kindly laugh. "I don't want to drag any stories out by the roots. The doctor can doubtless explain it all in good season."

"Well, Colonel Brainard," answered Belknap, bulkily, "to tell the truth, I really don't know anything about it, and I don't know any one who *does*, though I have heard some woman-talk about the post. The relations between Dr. Quin and some of the officers of the Eleventh were rather strained, and he is a somewhat reserved and secretive man. The stories were set afloat here last fall, and we *had* to hear more or less of them until the Eleventh went away this spring. We know only that Dr. Quin has been to Dunraven and the rest of us haven't. Possibly some of the Eleventh were piqued because they had no such luck, or perhaps their ladies did not like it because Quin wouldn't tell them anything about what he saw. At all events, he refused to talk on the subject at all, and allowed people to draw their own conclusions."

"He probably told his post commander," suggested Lieutenant Farnham, who, as acting adjutant of the post and an aspirant for the adjutancy of the regiment, thought it a good opportunity of putting in a word as indicative of what *he* considered the bounden duty of an officer under like circumstances.

"Well, no, I fancy not," replied Belknap. "About the only thing we really do know is that, in a somewhat angry interview last fall, Colonel Stratton forbade Dr. Quin's leaving the post or going to Dunraven without his express permission. I happened to be in the office at the time."

"Was it before or after that that he was said to go there so often?" asked Farnham.

"Well, both," answered Belknap, reluctantly. "But understand me, Mr. Farnham, I know nothing whatever of the matter."

"I should not suppose that Colonel Stratton would care to restrict his post surgeon from going thither if they needed his professional services," said Colonel Brainard, pleasantly.

"That was the point at issue, apparently," answered Belknap. "Colonel Stratton said that it was *not* on professional grounds that he went, and thereby seemed to widen the breach between them. Dr. Quin would not speak to the colonel after that, except when duty required it."

The conversation changed here, and little more was said; but Colonel

Brainard could not help thinking of a matter that he carefully kept to himself. It was not his custom to require his officers to ask permission to leave the garrison for a ride or hunt when they were to be absent from no duty, and only by day. Here it was midnight, as he thought it over, and the doctor had not returned, neither had he mentioned his desire to ride away, although he had been with the colonel wellnigh an hour before parade. True, he had sent the doctor word to go and join Lieutenant Perry at the gate of Dunraven, and *that* would account for his detention; but he knew that the surgeon was several miles away from his post and his patients at the moment that message was sent.

Meantime, Perry, too, was having a communion with himself and finding it all vexation of spirit. All the way home the memory of that sweet English face was uppermost in his thoughts. He had been startled at the sight of a young and fair woman at Dunraven; he had felt a sense of inexplicable rejoicing when she said to him, "I am Miss Maitland;" it would have jarred him to know that she was wife; he was happy, kneeling by the side of the beautiful girl he had never seen before that very evening, and delighted that he could be of service to her. All this was retrospect worth indulging; but then arose the black shadow on his vision. How came Dr. Quin striding in there as though "native and to the manner born"?—how came he to call her "Gladys"? Perry had been pondering over this matter for full half an hour on the homeward ride before he bethought him of Mrs. Lawrence's remarks about the signal-lights. One thing led to another in his recollection of her talk. The doctor answered the signals,—no one else; the doctor and no one else was received at Dunraven; the doctor had declined to answer any questions about the people at the ranch,—had been silent and mysterious, yet frequent in his visits. And then, more than all, what was that Mrs. Lawrence had said or intimated, that Mrs. Quin, "such a lovely woman, too," had taken her children and left him early that spring, and all on account of somebody or something connected with Dunraven Ranch? Good heavens! It could not be "Gladys." And yet—

Instead of taking a bath and going to bed, Mr. Perry poked his head into Parke's bachelor chamber as he reached the little cottage they shared in common. No Gladys disturbed the junior's dreams, apparently, for he was breathing regularly, sleeping the sleep of the just; and so, finding no one to talk to and being in no mood to go to bed at an hour so comparatively early when he had so much to think about, Perry filled a pipe and perched himself in a big chair by the window-seat, intending to think it all over again. He was beginning to hate that doctor: he would have chafed at the idea of any bachelor's being before him in an acquaintance with Gladys Maitland, but a married man, knowing her so well as to make his wife jealous and himself indifferent to that fact,—knowing her so well as to drive "such a lovely woman, too," into taking her children and quitting the marital roof,—that was too much of a bad thing, and Perry was sore discomfited. He got up, impatient and restless, passed out to the little piazza in front of his quarters, and began pacing up and down, the glow from his corn-

cob pipe making a fiery trail in the darkness. He would have been glad to go back to the colonel and keep watch with him; but there was one thing connected with his visit to Dunraven that he could not bear to speak of, especially as those words of Mrs. Lawrence recurred again and again to his memory. He had not said one word—he did not want to tell—of Gladys Maitland.

And so it happened that Perry, too, was awake and astir when the footsteps of the cavalry sergeant were heard on their way to Captain Stryker's quarters. Listening, he noted that the soldier had halted at the colonel's, held a brief conversation with that officer, and then turned back across the parade. Instantly divining that news had come of Sergeant Gwynne, Perry seized his forage-cap and hurried in pursuit. He overtook the trooper just beyond the guard-house, and went with him eagerly to the stables. A moment more, and he was bending over a soldier's bedside in a little room adjoining the forage-shed and by the light of a dim stable-lantern looking down into the bruised and battered features of the non-commissioned officer whom he had pronounced of all others at Rossiter the most respected and highly thought of by the cavalry garrison.

"Sergeant, I'm very sorry to see you so badly mauled," said Perry. "How on earth did it happen?"

Gwynne turned his head painfully until the one unbandaged eye could look about and see that none of the stable-guard were within hearing, then back again and up into the sympathetic face of his young superior.

"Lieutenant, I must tell you and the captain; and yet it is a matter I profoundly wish to keep as secret as possible,—the story of my day's adventure, I mean."

"You need not tell me at all if you do not wish to," said Perry; "though I think it is due to yourself that the captain should know how it was you were gone all day and that your horse and you both came back in such condition."

"I understand, sir, fully," answered Gwynne, respectfully. "I shall tell the captain the whole story, if he so desire. Meantime, I can only ask that no one else be told. If the men in the troop had an inkling of the true story there would be endless trouble; and so I have tried to account for it by saying my horse and I had an ugly fall while running a coyote through the timber. We did see a coyote, down near the ranch on the Monee, and I did have an ugly fall: I was set upon by three of those ranchmen and badly handled."

"Yes, damn them!" said Perry, excitedly and wrathfully. "I've had an experience with them myself to-night, while we were searching for you."

"So much the more reason, sir, why my mishap should not be told among the men. The two affairs combined would be more than they would stand. There are enough Irishmen here in our troop alone to go down and wipe that ranch out of existence; and I fear trouble as it stands."

"Whether there will be trouble or not will depend very much on the future conduct of the proprietor and manager down there. Of

course we cannot tolerate for an instant the idea of their maintaining a gang of ruffians there who are allowed to assault officers or men who happen to ride around that neighborhood. You were not inside their limits, were you?"

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant, painfully, "I was: I had tied my horse outside and ventured in to get a nearer look at the buildings."

"What time did it happen?"

"This morning, sir; not more than an hour and a half after you spoke to me in the valley."

"Indeed! Then you must have lain there all day! Why, Gwynne, this will never do. I'll go and get the surgeon and have him look you over. You must have been brutally mauled, and must be utterly exhausted."

"Don't go, sir," said the sergeant, eagerly stretching forth a hand. "It—it isn't as you think, sir. I have been kindly cared for. They're not all ruffians down there, and the men who assaulted me will be fully punished. I've been quite as well nursed and fed and brandied and bandaged as though I'd been carried right to hospital. Indeed, I don't need anything but rest. I'll be all right in a day."

"But I think Dr. Quin ought to see you and satisfy us you are not injured."

"Be satisfied, sir. The doctor *has* seen me."

"Why, but how?—where? He was here all day, and only went away at sunset. He joined me at Dunraven about nine o'clock, and hadn't returned when I came in. Did he find you and bring you back?"

Gwynne hesitated painfully again:

"The doctor saw me this evening,—down near where I was hurt; but I got back here without his help, sir. Lieutenant," said the soldier, suddenly, "there are one or two things connected with this day's work that I cannot tell. Come what may, I must not speak of them, even to the captain."

Perry was silent a moment. Then he kindly answered,—

"I do not think any one here will press you to tell what you consider it might be ungrateful or dishonorable in you to reveal. I will do what I can to see that your wishes are respected. And now, if you are sure I can do nothing for you, good-night, sergeant." And the young officer held out his hand.

"Good-night, sir," answered Gwynne. He hesitated one moment. It was the first time since he entered service, nearly five years before, that an officer had offered him his hand. It was a new and strange sensation. It might not be "good discipline" to take advantage of it, but there were other reasons. Gwynne looked up in the frank blue eyes of his lieutenant and read something there that told a new story. Out came a hand as slender and shapely as that of the young officer, and the two were silently and firmly clasped.

"How can I question him?" said Perry to himself as he walked slowly homeward. "Is there not something I am holding back?—something I cannot speak of? By Jupiter! can his be the same reason?"

IX.

At just what hour the post surgeon returned to Fort Rossiter that night no one seemed to know. He was present at sick-call, and imperturbable as ever, on the following morning, and the few officers who were at head-quarters after guard-mounting were able to affirm that the colonel had been courteous as usual in his greeting to the medical officer, and that nothing whatever had been said about his being away so late the previous evening. Captain Stryker came home soon after midnight, had a brief talk with his colonel, and went over to the stables to inquire into Gwynne's condition before he went to bed. Parke came into Perry's room after morning stables, and told him, as he was yawning and stretching in bed, that the captain had had quite a long talk with Gwynne that morning, and that "something was up,"—he didn't know what. Later in the day Perry was sent for by Colonel Brainard, and found the commanding officer in consultation with Captain Stryker and two other troop-commanders. At their request he repeated the story of his adventure at Dunraven, beginning with his instructions to the men he left at the gate, and ending with old Maitland's swooning; and about an hour after he had finished he saw the adjutant with a small escort ride away down the valley, and rightly conjectured that the colonel had sent a letter to Dunraven inquiring into the cause of the assaults on two members of his command. Battalion drill kept him occupied all the morning; a garrison court convened at noon and sat until skirmish drill began at three P.M.; and so it happened that not until near parade did he find a moment's time to himself. He longed to see Mrs. Lawrence and question her as to the nature of the "Dunraven stories" she had mentioned; for what had been a matter of indifference to him then had suddenly become of vivid interest. There were ladies sitting on the Lawrences' gallery, he could plainly see, as the cavalry officers came tramping in from afternoon stables, but he could not hope to ask or hear anything about a matter so near his heart in the presence of so many sympathetic and interested listeners. He kept away towards his own gate, therefore, until he saw that there, leaning on the gate-post, and apparently awaiting him, stood Dr. Quin.

Perry would gladly have avoided the doctor: the antagonism he was beginning to feel for him was of a character that would hardly brook concealment. Cordial and joyous in manner as he was to almost every man, woman, and child he met, it was all the more noticeable that to the very few whom he held in dislike or distrust his bearing was cold and repellent in the last degree. Something told him the doctor was there to speak to him about their chance meeting at Dunraven. He did not want to speak to him at all, just now. Yet how could he hope to have these matters explained without a meeting and a talk? While the other officers strolled over and stopped, most of them, in front of the group of ladies at Lawrence's, Perry stalked straight across the parade and the boundary road, with his blue eyes fixed on the doctor's face.

The latter was studying him as he came, and doubtless read that

expression of coldness and distrust: possibly he resented it. At all events, something prompted him to speak in a tone less cordial than he had ever employed towards Perry,—“a youngster whom I thoroughly approve of,” as he said before he had known him a week. Still leaning on the gate-post, and resting his head on his hand, the doctor began:

“Mr. Perry, I have been to see you twice to-day, but could not find you, and I wanted to speak with you on a matter of some importance.”

“You could have found me on drill or the court, if anything immediate was needed. I have been nowhere else, except to stables,” said Perry, shortly.

“It was a personal matter,—a somewhat embarrassing one,—and I thought best to see you alone.”

“Well, here I am, Dr. Quin: drive ahead and let us have it.”

“I wanted to ask you if, while you were at the ranch last night, you saw anything of a large signet-ring, with a crest and motto engraved on the stone.”

“I did not,—unless you mean the one Mr. Maitland wore.”

“The very one! You noticed that, did you?”

“I noticed he had something of the kind on his left hand when he came down.”

“And it was nowhere to be found after you went away. You may remember you were chafing and slapping that hand; and I thought you might have accidentally removed it at that time.”

“The reflection is not a pleasant one, Dr. Quin,” said Perry, with an angry light in the blue eyes.

“Pardon me, Mr. Perry: I put it awkwardly, but I mean no reflection whatever. Miss Maitland mentioned your efforts to restore the old gentleman to consciousness, and together we searched the sofa and the floor after we had put him safely to bed and discovered the loss of the ring. It is one to which he attaches peculiar value, and its loss has preyed upon him. While I know very well you could not have the ring, I was asked to ascertain if you remembered seeing it, and so establish the truth of Mr. Maitland’s belief that it was on his finger when he went to that room.”

“It was; but I do not recollect its being on his hand after he was carried to the sofa. It would surely have attracted my attention while chafing it.”

“The parlor, hall, and piazza have been swept and searched, I am told by this note,” and the doctor indicated a little missive he held in his hand, whereat Perry’s face did not brighten, “and with no success. I was asked to inquire of you, and if it has annoyed you, as I infer by your manner, pray let that be my apology. Then I am to say you saw it when Mr. Maitland entered the room, but not again?”

“Precisely; unless you choose to add to your correspondent that the next time I am associated with missing property at Dunraven I would prefer to be questioned direct, and not through a third party.”

A quiet smile shone for an instant on the doctor’s grave face:

“I fear that I have not accomplished my mission very diplomatically, Mr. Perry, and am sorry to have vexed you. The colonel tells me, by the way, that I ought to say to you that the reason I was so long

in reaching your party last night was that I was detained attending to another case,—one of our own men. Good-evening, sir." And, raising his forage-cap, the doctor walked slowly and with dignity away, leaving Perry too surprised to speak.

"The colonel told him to tell me?" was Perry's wondering soliloquy at last. "Then I suppose he must have told the chief some story to account for his being away." It was pretty evident from the young fellow's manner as he entered the house that the story was not one which struck him as being entitled to confidence or consideration.

On the table in his little sitting-room lay a dainty note. It was not the first he had received under that superscription, and he had not been slow to open and read them. If anything, the cloud upon his forehead seemed to deepen at sight of it. He picked it up, looked impatiently at the address, hesitated a moment, tossed it back on his desk, and went into the inner room. He would not read it now; it was almost parade-time; he had to bathe and change his dress, for after parade he was to dine at the quarters of an infantry friend, and Captain and Mrs. Lawrence were to be of the party. Already it was noted that when any of the few infantry people at the post gave a little tea or dinner at which only eight or ten were gathered together, the Belknaps were not invited on the same evening with Mr. Perry, and *vice versa*. When Parke came in, whistling and singing and banging doors and making all manner of uncouth noise in the exuberance of his boyish spirits, he bolted into Perry's domain, as was his wont, and began a rattling comment on the events of the day.

"By the way," he broke in, suddenly, "we can't both go to-morrow; and I suppose you want to."

"Go where?"

"Why, out with the hounds: to-morrow's the day, you know."

Perry gave a whistle of perplexity. The colonel had promised the ladies that there should be a big run this very week. All the fleet hounds of the cavalry battalion were to be out, and all the officers who could be spared from the day's duties: a detachment was to go over into the valley of a stream some ten miles away, pitch tents in the shade, and there set luncheon for the entire party; horses were to be provided for all the ladies who cared to go mounted, buggies and "buckboards" were to convey the others, and it was to be a gala occasion. Antelope, coyote, or jack-rabbit,—any four-footed game the prairie afforded was to be "coursed" in due state and ceremony; the ladies "in at the death" were to be crowned and subsequently presented with trophies of the chase more sightly than the mask or brush *au naturel*. The affair had been gayly talked over that very evening of the colonel's dinner, but the events of the previous day and the perplexities of the one just closing had completely driven it all out of his head.

And yet he was engaged to ride with Mrs. Belknap,—the Amazon of Fort Rossiter! and for the first time in his life Ned Perry would have been glad of an excuse to get away from a gallop with an accomplished *équestrienne*.

"You don't mean to say you had forgotten it?" asked Parke, in amaze.

"Don't blow on me, there's a good fellow; but, after all my 'breaks' of yesterday,—getting an absent from drill and into a row at the ranch,—I declare it had slipped my memory. No, you go, Parke: I don't deserve to be let off anything, after yesterday. You've been sticking to duty like a brick ever since you joined, and Stryker ought to give you the preference."

"But you're engaged to ride with Mrs. Belknap," said Parke.

"Who told you so?"

"I heard her say so. Dana asked if he might have the pleasure, just a while ago, and she smilingly replied that it would have been delightful, but that you had asked her four days ago, when it was first planned."

"So I had; but I've been getting into scrapes ever since, and I oughtn't to go. By Jove! I'll write her a note now and say I can't get off. It's true enough. I wouldn't let such a fellow go if I commanded the troop. I'd make him stay in and attend roll-call a week."

"Well, Mrs. Belknap expects you," said Parke, dubiously. "Not but what Dana would be glad to take your place. Belknap can't go: he's too bulky to ride, and she'd leave him miles astern first run we had, sure."

Suddenly Perry bethought him of the note, and made a dive into the sitting-room, towel in hand and shirt-sleeves rolled to the elbows. It read,—

"MON AMI,—

"You go to the Spragues' to dine this evening, and there will be cards, and you will not be able to get away until very late. Will you not come in a little while before parade,—without fail? There is something I greatly want to see you about.

"Sincerely,

"F. E. B.

"Come early as possible after stables."

"Thunder and turf!" exclaimed Perry; "and there goes first call now! Here, Parke, you're dressed; run over and tell Mrs. Belknap I just this instant read her note and I can't come: I'll get a late as it is."

"How can I, man?" shouted Parke, as he fled. "I've got to get into war-paint too.—Lucky thing for me," he added, in lower tone. "I don't want to be the one to tell the prettiest woman at Rossiter that her note that she sent here at noon wasn't opened until first call for parade."

Perry's dressing was completed at racing speed, but even then he was buckling his sabre-belt as the assembly sounded, and he had to go straight across to where his troop was forming,—a glittering rank of yellow plumes,—and so could only give a hurried sidelong glance towards Belknap's quarters. There was her bonnie ladyship pacing up and down the veranda; and he knew well he would have to account for his sins. All through parade his thoughts were divided between the fair face he had seen at Dunraven the night before and the dark one with the long, curving lashes sweeping those soft, peachy cheeks

and half veiling those wonderful, liquid, speaking, side-glancing eyes. He saw Mrs. Belknap stroll forth a moment as though to join the group of ladies on the walk, then return to her slow, graceful, languid promenade up and down her piazza. He knew that he must hasten to her the instant the rank of officers dispersed and make his peace if possible, but as they marched to the front and saluted the commanding officer he signalled that he had something to say to them all, and, moving away to the edge of the parade-ground, so that the troops might not be detained on the line, he gathered his officers about him, a silent group under the little shade-trees that bounded the road-way, and took a letter from the breast of his uniform coat.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this will be of importance to some of you, and of interest to all. It explains something none of us understood, and contains matter that I deem it best you all should hear. It is a letter from the manager of Dunraven Ranch.—Mr. Adjutant, you read it."

And, clearing his throat, Mr. Farnham began :

"DUNRAVEN RANCH,
"Friday.

"COLONEL BRAINARD,—th Cavalry, Fort Rossiter :

"DEAR SIR,—Mr. Maitland is confined to his bed, and too ill to personally reply to your letter of this morning, which was duly received at the hands of your adjutant. He directs me to write as follows : that, while he regrets the boisterous conduct of some of his employees last evening and their assault on Mr. Perry, he considers that in view of the results—a broken head on the part of one of our people and no apparent damage to Mr. Perry—the matter should not be pressed. As to the other assault alluded to, he has no knowledge of it whatever, and can find no man who has.

"The distinct understanding between Mr. Maitland and the former commanding officer at Fort Rossiter was that none of the garrison should ever pass within our lines ; and we agreed on the other hand that none of our people should ever trespass on the reservation. Mr. Maitland holds that it was the duty of Colonel Brainard's predecessor to acquaint him with the terms of this agreement, and the residents at Dunraven had no means of knowing that the invaders of last evening were not the very men whom the proper authorities had pledged themselves to restrain from such aggression.

"Mr. Maitland begs that Colonel Brainard will in future ratify and conform with the agreement formally entered into by his predecessor.

"Respectfully,"

"P. EWEN, *Manager.*"

There was a moment of puzzled silence. The colonel looked quizzically around upon the circle of bronzed and soldierly faces under the black helmets. Captain Stryker's lips were twitching with amusement behind their black fringe of beard. No one spoke at first ; but presently a deep-voiced troop-commander gave vent to his emotions :

"What a bombastic old crank ! Who is he ?"

"An Englishman,—the owner of the biggest ranch in this part of Texas," answered the colonel. "Captain Belknap, Captain Lawrence, have you any knowledge of the agreement of which he speaks?"

"Nothing beyond the vague talk we heard. Dr. Quin would be more apt to know what Colonel Stratton agreed to than we would," answered Belknap.

"I will ask the doctor this evening. Meantime, knowing no reason why such a policy of non-intercourse should be observed, I shall not recognize it. What is more, while you will caution your men to respect Dunraven bounds as they would other private property, let them show no hostility to the ranch-people who may have occasion to visit us. The man who brought this note tells me he was threatened and abused by some cavalymen near the stables. Mr. Maitland professes to have no knowledge of another assault; but we have evidence that Sergeant Gwynne was beaten by three fellows on the Dunraven grounds yesterday. That matter is yet to be settled. Now one thing more: troop and company commanders will closely watch their men the next few nights,—keep a sharp lookout on the quarters until midnight, to see that no men slip away; after midnight the guard must attend to it. There is an element in the ranks that would be only too glad to go down to Dunraven some night and have satisfaction on their own account for yesterday's affairs. This must *not* be permitted. See to it, gentlemen. That is all for the present.—Mr. Perry, will you come with me a moment?"

Perry went. Mrs. Belknap saw him go, and believed herself slighted.

X.

The hounds were out, and all Fort Rossiter "society" was with them. The day was faultless,—neither too warm nor too cloudy; a brisk westerly breeze sent the cloud-shadows sailing steadily across the broad prairie sea and keeping the veils and skirts of the Amazons of the party a-flutter. Three there were of these, the rest of the sisterhood preferring to follow the hunt by buggy or buck-board, though frankly expressing their envy of the fortunate riders. Mounted on her own spirited little bay, admirably fitted as to habit, and sitting squarely and well, Mrs. Belknap would have been the centre of observation of all the cavalry officers even had she not been, as she incontestably was, the beauty of the garrison. The colonel had offered Mrs. Lawrence one of his own horses, and therefore was accorded the right of being her escort. Mrs. Sprague was similarly indebted for her "mount" to Captain Stryker; and a very bright and beaming little body she was as she rode over the springy turf at the side of the dark-haired troop-leader. She dearly loved fresh air, sunshine, space, healthful exercise of every kind, was the champion at tennis and an indomitable walker, but a ride was something better than all, and of course the rarest pleasure. The wife of a faithful and honest old subaltern who had reaped his four "fogies" for twenty years' service and was still looking forward to his captaincy, her opportunities for riding had been limited to those occasions when some thoughtful cavalryman would

send his horse around with his compliments and an invitation to take a canter. The Eleventh were very busy during their stay at Rossiter, or very chary of their horseflesh. They never rode, said the infantry people, in speaking of them to their successors, while the —th were not only themselves in saddle hours each day, but they were constantly sending horses to the ladies; and—wonder of wonders!—*all* the infantry officers were invited to join in the hunt, and such as could go were provided with excellent mounts. And so it happened that a large and merry party had taken the field: the colonel with a dozen of his officers,—cavalry and infantry,—the ladies, the sergeant in charge of the hounds, with his two or three assistants, and the brace of orderlies, made a "field" that covered a goodly front as in dispersed order, chatting and laughing, they swept out eastward from the post, following in the wake of the master of the hounds and his long, lithe, fleet-limbed coursers themselves. Beautiful creatures were these hounds of the —th,—many of them black as jet, others a slaty blue, others a quakerish drab, but all with huge rounded chests, powerful shoulders and haunches, and wonderful limbs for speed. There were nearly two dozen of them, springily trotting along behind their huntsman, with lolling tongues and drooping head and tail. Yet eyes and ears were eager and alert, watching, waiting for the signal from anywhere along the extended front that should start them in a race that would leave the very gale behind. They are the coursers, the runners, the aristocrats of the chase, disdainful of the work being done by their humbler kindred,—the canine skirmishers who are bounding, bustling, scurrying, sniffing, scampering everywhere over the prairie to their front,—yet keenly observant of the results. All manner of dog—even volunteer whelp from the Cheyenne camp—is to be seen along that outer line,—spaniels, a lordly Newfoundland, all varieties of terrier and "curs of low degree," all, even an occasional bird-dog, scouting the prairie in desperate eagerness to snap and seize a rabbit or throttle a coyote, for down in their jealous hearts they well know that, once started, the quarry leaps for the far horizon, vanishes from their view like the "Split-the-Wind" of tradition, and leaves them, despite heroic effort, far, far behind, while the lithe-limbed greyhounds and the racers of the garrison horses alone can keep in sight of the chase.

"Hard lines on Perry, isn't it?" said Mr. Graham, as he trotted up beside Mrs. Belknap and took his place for the moment with her bevy of cavaliers. "First time he ever missed a hunt, I reckon."

"He needn't have missed this one," said Parke. "It was my week, and I told him to go; and Captain Stryker said so, too; but——"

Here Mr. Parke broke off suddenly and looked in mild wonderment in Dana's face, for that young gentleman had managed, unseen by Mrs. Belknap, to swing free his right foot and give the speaker's left a vehement kick. Too late, however. Mrs. Belknap had heard it.

"Are you cavalymen *all* so little to be trusted?" she asked, with a brilliant smile upon her flushing face. Exercise and excitement had lent unusual sparkle to her eyes and color to her cheeks—"she is positively beautiful to-day," as Mrs. Lawrence confessed to the colonel at the moment.

"I had a note from Mr. Perry this morning saying he was grievously disappointed, but that some troop-duty had been assigned to him which could not be transferred and he must stay and finish it."

"What he said is true, Mrs. Belknap," promptly asseverated Mr. Dana. "The papers have all to be in readiness for muster on Monday, and the saddle-kits put in shape for inspection."

"Only in Captain Stryker's troop?" softly inquired the lady, with eyelids rising incredulously.

"No, of course not. One officer is back at the post from each troop. It happened to fall on Perry in his."

"I fancy I should prefer serving in some older captain's troop if I were Mr. Perry. It seems that while your other captains stay home and look after their companies, Captain Stryker has a subaltern attend to his while *he* comes a-hunting."

"On the other hand, we fellows have a dozen things to do in our troops that Captain Stryker does himself in his. It's as broad as it's long, Mrs. Belknap," said Dana. He did not fancy her criticising the methods of his cavalry associates, and was possibly a little piqued at the decided annoyance she showed at Perry's failure to attend. Meantime, Stryker, all unconscious of her censure, was chatting laughingly with Mrs. Sprague and exchanging shots with the colonel and Mrs. Lawrence. The four were getting on admirably together, and seemed too much absorbed in their own fun to note the fact that Mrs. Belknap and her knot of four or five satellites had been gradually edging away towards the right, and that the rest of the hunt was becoming widely scattered.

"It is time we stirred up a jack-rabbit at least," said the colonel. "Suppose we veer over towards the northeast a little. Whatever we do, we want no chase down there towards Dunraven: those wire fences would spoil it all."

"I wonder if those people never hunt?" said Mr. Farnham, who had joined the quartette: he always kept close to his colonel, as befitted an aspirant for the adjutancy. "Englishmen are generally game for all manner of sport."

"I can see horsemen out there on the prairie to the east of the ranch," said Stryker, whose eyes were keen, "and I could have sworn a moment ago that I saw a horsewoman."

"Nonsense, Captain Stryker!" exclaimed Mrs. Lawrence, yet with quick glance at Mrs. Sprague. "What *could* you have taken for a 'lady on a horseback'? Do you suppose there could be ladies at Dunraven and we not know it?"

"Hardly possible," answered the captain; "and therefore I doubted the evidence of my senses. Yet something very like a lady followed by a groom rode down the slope into the valley about ten minutes ago. She is out of sight in the timber now. If Perry were only with us I'd send him off there to see."

"Yes, we miss Perry on our hunts," said the colonel to his lady friends. "He is one of our best riders and most enthusiastic sportsmen. He *will* be out, will he not, Stryker?"

"Yes, sir. There is really no necessity for his staying in, and I so

told him ; but he felt that he ought to, at least until certain work was finished. Then he said he could ride eastward and join us. Hurrah ! there they go !"

Far out to the front, straight to the east, "a gray streak with a white tip to it" went shooting into space as though launched from some invisible bow drawn by giant power. A big jack-rabbit, all legs and ears, had listened quivering and trembling to the sounds of the approaching hunt, until an enterprising terrier, foremost skirmisher of the line, fairly tumbled over him as he crouched behind a little bunch of weeds : then with one mighty leap and the accompaniment of a wild yelp from his discoverer he sprang forth into a race for his precious life. "Hoy ! hoy !" yells the sergeant as he sights the quarry. "Hurrah !" shout the nearest huntsmen, and, with one simultaneous impulse, skirmishing curs, stealthy, springing hounds, eager steeds, and jubilant riders,—men and women,—away goes the entire field sweeping in pursuit. At first all is one mad rush until it is certain that the rabbit is a veteran who understands well the maxim that "a stern-chase is a long chase" all the world over. Let him keep it well in mind, fix his eyes on that one distant, shadowy butte on the eastern horizon, and bear away for that, straight as the flight of laden honey-bee, and his chance for life is fair : he has fifty yards the start of the nearest hound. Let him swerve or hesitate, and, like the original of the famous comparison, he is lost. The prairie is level as a floor, the turf firm and springy : not a prairie-dog has mined the sod or dugged a pit for the unwary. "Magnificent ground !—couldn't have better !" shouts the colonel to Mrs. Lawrence, who is somewhat nervously tugging at her reins and leaning back in the saddle. "Let him go. There isn't a possibility of a stumble. Look at Mrs. Belknap !" he adds. He would not do so ordinarily, but he and his fair partner are being left hopelessly behind in the race, and, though his big charger rarely lands him among the foremost and the colonel does not attempt to vie with the light riders among the youngsters, he cannot bear "dragging." Mrs. Lawrence gives one glance in the indicated direction, sees Mrs. Belknap skimming like a bird across the grassy level, riding from the right front diagonally towards the frantic chase. Gentle as she is and unenvious of her rival's superiority in some respects, she *won't* be thought a coward. The color deepens on her cheek, her soft eyes flash, she bites her pretty red lips, and, to Lawrence's amaze, her riding-whip comes viciously down upon her courser's flank and her little hands give rein. Away she flies, out to the front, leaving her lord and master and his friend, her escort the colonel, thundering bulkily in her track, but losing ground with every stride. Delighted to have so light a rider, the colonel's second horse makes play for the very leaders. Here, close behind the master of the hounds, all eyes fixed on that bounding tuft of gray and white a few score yards ahead, bending over their horses' necks and keeping just enough pressure on the bit to prevent over-riding the huntsman, ride Parke and Graham, two "light weights," who have coursed many a mile of prairie. Just behind them, a little to their right, rides Mrs. Belknap, her veil fluttering straight out behind, her glorious eyes flashing, her dark skin flushed with triumph

and the exhilaration of the dashing pace, her little hands wound about in the reins she holds so firmly. Splendidly she sits her fleet racer, and Dana has to urge and spur his clumsier troop-horse to keep in close attendance. These four are well in advance of all the others. Back of them, gallantly urging on her sturdy sorrel, comes Mrs. Sprague, with Stryker riding warily alongside and watching her "going" before he will satisfy himself that it is safe to trust her to her own guiding. Level as the prairie is here, he knows that a mile or so ahead there are "breaks" leading down into the valley of one of the innumerable tributaries of the Washita. Then the story may be different. He looks up in surprise at the thunder of hoofs close alongside, and Mrs. Lawrence, with excitement in her eyes, overtakes, then passes them on her way to the front. "See!" he points to his partner,— "see that dark shadow across the prairie out there. We cannot ride at this pace when we pass that hollow: the breaks set in still farther." He glances over his shoulder and signals to the nearest officer to follow Mrs. Lawrence and look out for her, and the gallant does his best, but all are at top speed; the colonel and the heavy weights—infantry and cavalry—are beginning to lose ground, and still that gray "puff-ball" far to the front seems inch by inch to be slipping away from his pursuers; still the long, lean greyhounds, looking almost flat against the sward in their wonderful strides, speed on in relentless chase, eager muzzles outstretched, eager eyes glaring on the bounding quarry, gleaming muscles working in the sunshine like the steel rods of the drivers of the "lightning express." A dozen of them are bunched in the track of the chase; others are farther out to right and left. Not an inch do the pursuers seem to have gained: straight as an arrow has been the flight so far, but now the "breaks" are just ahead, little ravines cut in here and there across the level. Will he keep his determined course, up hill and down, straight away to the east, or will he lose heart, tack, veer, double and twist? If he swerve he is a lost rabbit!

Far to the rear, yelping, panting, distracted by this time, the terriers and mongrels, the original leaders, have fallen. The field, too, is strung out nearly a mile deep at the end of the first six minutes' run, for some of the laggards have given up and are disposed to wait for the coming of the buggies and buck-boards. Here at the front all is tense excitement. All eyes are on the rabbit, for now or never will the crisis come. The horses are breathing heavily, but with no thought of slackening speed. "Watch him now as he sights that *arroyo*!" shouts Graham to Parke, for far out to the right front a ravine bursts off to the southeast, and one of its shallow contributors stretches obliquely across the rabbit's frenzied vision. "Veer that way; he'll take it, sure!" shouts the huntsman; and, sure enough, no sooner does he reach it than the gray victim darts down the winding shelter, as though hopeful that his sudden twist would throw his pursuers off the sight; scent the greyhound has none. The move is disastrous; "Hi!" shout the leading riders, waving the pursuit to the right front, and, obedient to signal, the foremost hounds sweep in long curve into the *coulée*, striking it many a yard farther down than where the harried chase first dived into its treacherous shadows. And now those hounds who were out on the

right flank are up in line with the very leaders, and bounding along the level at the side of the ravine, yet keeping wary eye upon the chase. So, too, the horsemen. Making a deep curve in the ravine five hundred yards ahead, and confident that Bunny will blindly rush along his winding track, they strike out across the prairie, gaining twenty horse-lengths by the move; and now, with two or three of the oldest hounds, Parke, Dana, and Mrs. Belknap are darting on abreast of the chase. "Keep out there to the left, some of you!" shouts Dana. "He'll spring up the other side quick as he sees us. Drive him back." And, obedient to the signal of his waving hand, two of the leading troopers breast the slopes to the east, calling half a dozen hounds with them. Darting around a bend, Bunny's agonized eyes catch sight of the hounds and horses on the right bank, and like a flash he whirls, scampers up the opposite slope, and shoots out on the prairie again just in time to meet the hounds and troopers who have anticipated the move. Now he is wild and demoralized. Once more he dives into the ravine and sends the dust flying into the very faces of his pursuers, for now the leading hounds are so close that the foremost jaws are snapping the air at his every bound. A quick turn to the right and up the slope throws these leaders far—*too* far—beyond; they sweep around in long curve; but, though he has thrown them off, the hunted, senseless, helpless wretch has forgotten the trailers to the rear; they spring across the angle he has made, and are close as the original pursuers, and much the fresher. Wildly, madly now he twists and turns, first up one bank, then the other. Far to the rear the coming riders see the signs of his breaking down, mark the scurrying to and fro of horse and hound. "Come on!" they shout. "He's gone now, and we can be in at the death!" Mrs. Lawrence on one side of the ravine is as far to the front as Mrs. Belknap on the other. One of them *must* lose the brush: he cannot die on both sides at once. The dark beauty has had more than one rasping disappointment in the last two days: it would be intolerable now that, after all, Mrs. Lawrence, and not she, should prove the victor. Bunny makes one frantic rush up the slope to the right, and, with half a dozen hounds at his very heels, spins in front of her eyes, catches sight of two fresh antagonists confronting him, whirls suddenly about to the right, and almost dives under her horse's heaving barrel as he once more plunges into the ravine, down the rugged slope, up the gentle ascent to the other side. There half a dozen long, lean muzzles gleam close behind him; he falters, wavers; a sharp nose is thrust underneath him as he runs, a quick toss sends him kicking, struggling into air, and in another instant, with piteous but ineffectual squeak and pleading, he is the centre of a tumbling, snapping, fang-gnashing group of hounds, and his little life is torn out almost before Graham can leap from his saddle, beat them back with the visor of his cap, then, seizing the still quivering body by the legs that would have saved could that empty head only have directed, holds poor Bunny aloft in front of Mrs. Lawrence's snorting steed and proclaims her "Queen of the Chase."

And this, too, has Mrs. Belknap to see and strive to smile; while down in her heart she knows that it could not so have happened had Perry come.

XI.

Riding eastward just before noon, somewhat comforted in conscience because of his self-denial of the morning, Ned Perry scanned the distant prairie in search of the hunt. It was nearly luncheon-time, and he expected to find the party making its way to the little stream whither the baskets, boxes, and hampers had been despatched by wagon some hours before; but when he sighted the quartermaster driving homeward in his buggy he learned from that bulky veteran that rabbit after rabbit had been run, and that the whole party had finally decided to give dogs and horses a cool drink down in the Monee valley before starting northward across the prairie. "They must be getting down into the valley two or three miles east of the ranch just about now, and will go due north from there, unless they stir up more game along the Monee. If I were you," said the quartermaster, "I'd ride over to the lunch-stand. You won't get there much before the crowd."

Perry thanked him for the information, but, so far from accepting his advice, the younger officer turned his horse's head in the direction of Dunraven, and was speedily riding thither with an alacrity that he himself could hardly explain.

In his brief talk with the colonel after parade on the previous evening Perry had told him what he could of the characteristics of Messrs. Maitland and Ewen. The odd letter which had been sent by them had given the commanding officer cause for much thought, and he was desirous, evidently, of gathering from Perry's observations as complete an idea as was possible of their life and surroundings. And still Perry had found it impossible to volunteer any description of Miss Maitland; he could not bear to speak of her until—until he knew more of the doctor's purpose in his visits to the ranch. He had been detained by his commander just long enough to make it necessary for him to go direct to the Spragues' without leaving his helmet and sabre at home. They were waiting dinner for him as it was, but Mrs. Belknap took no note of that circumstance: what she saw was that he had avoided even passing within hail of her piazza both before and after parade.

Now, though conscious of no intention of avoidance, Perry rode forth to the meeting of this day with some little misgiving. In the first place, he knew that he must strive to make his peace with this slighted lady; and yet, in view of all he had seen and heard in the past forty-eight hours, how utterly dwarfed had that affair—his laughing flirtation with Mrs. Belknap—become! Had any one told him his attentions to her and her marked preference for his society were matters that people were beginning to talk of,—some with sly enjoyment, others with genuine regret,—he would have been grateful for the information, instead of resentful, as, with most men, would be the case ninety-nine times out of a hundred. But he knew nothing of this, and had too little experience to suspect the comments in circulation. She was most interesting—up to the day before yesterday; he loved to ride or dance with her; he enjoyed a chat with her more than he

could tell. A most sympathetic and attentive listener was Mrs. Belknap, and her voice was low and sweet and full of subtly caressing tones. She had made him talk to her by the hour of his home, his hopes and ambitions, his profession and his prospects, and had held him in a silken bondage that he had no desire to escape.

And yet, as he rode out on the breezy plain this brilliant day, he found all thought of her distasteful, and his eyes, far from searching for the flutter of her trim habit in the distant riding-party, *would* go a-roaming over the intervening shades and shallows down in the Monee valley and seek the bare, brown walls of Dunraven far across the stream. It was odd indeed that he should have sought this, the longest way round, on his ride in quest of his companions from the fort.

Once again he looked at the isolated clump of buildings from his post of observation on the bluff; once again he saw across the stream and through the trees the barbed barrier that had caused both him and his men such laceration of flesh and temper; once again he saw the shallow valley winding away to the southeast, decked with its scrubby fringe-work of cottonwood and willow; but this time, three miles away its accustomed solitude was broken by groups of riders and darting black specks of dogs, all moving northward once more and already breasting the slopes. He should have turned away eastward and ridden across country to join them, but down here in the valley, only a short distance away, absorbed in watching the hunting-party, sat Mr. Ewen on a pawing and excited bay. Whatever coolness his rider might feel at this discovery, it was not shared by Nolan: he pricked up his ears and hailed his fellow-quadruped with cordial and unaffected pleasure, a neigh that the English-bred horse was so utterly uninsular as to whirl about and answer with corresponding warmth. Ewen caught at his heavy Derby and jerked it off his bullet head with an air of mingled embarrassment and civility, replacing it with similarly spasmodic haste. Perry coolly, but with a certain easy grace, raised his forage-cap in response to the salutation, and then, seeing the manager still looking at him as though he wanted to say something and did not know how to begin, gave Nolan his head and rode down to short hailing-distance.

"We meet on neutral ground out here, Mr. Ewen. I suppose your exclusive employer over yonder can hardly prohibit your answering civil inquiries after his health?" And, though he meant to be distant, Perry found himself smiling at the oddity of the situation.

"Do you know, I was just thinking about you," answered Ewen, "and wondering whether you were with that party down yonder? The old gentleman is better, thanks. He had two pretty bad nights, but is coming around slowly."

"And Miss Maitland,—how is she?"

"Rather seedy. She has had a good deal of care and vexation of late, I fancy, and this is no place for a young girl, anyhow."

"Well, you have some appreciation of the true character of Dunraven as a residence, after all!" answered Perry. "Now, if you can give me any good reason why she should live in this utterly out-of-the-way place, you will lift a weight from my mind."

"Oh, they don't live here, you know," spoke Ewen, hurriedly. "She comes here only when her father does. It is her own doing. She goes with him everywhere, and will not leave him. She's all he has, don't you know?"

"I don't know anything about it. You Dunraven people seem averse to any expression of interest or courtesy from your fellow-men, but I'm free to say I should like to know what on earth there is in American cavalymen to make them such objects of aversion to your master; and I would be glad to know how it is such a girl as that is dragged into such a hole as yonder."

Ewen sat in silence a moment, studying the young fellow's face.

"You deserve a better welcome there," he presently answered, "and I don't know that I can do better than to tell you the truth,—what I know of it. And let me tell you that if the old man knew of my speaking of it to any one, I'd lose the most lucrative but least attractive place I ever had. Do you see?"

"Then perhaps you had better not tell me. I do not care to pry into secrets."

"Oh, this is no secret. It was *that* that drove him here: everybody knew it in England. You were mighty shabbily treated at the ranch, and you requited it by preventing what would have been a bloody row and by lending us a helping hand. Even the old man recognizes that; and I think he'd be glad to say so to you, and see you, if you were not just what you are,—a cavalry officer."

"Why, what on earth can we have done? If any of our cloth have wronged Mr. Maitland in any way, it is our right to know it and take it up."

"It wasn't *your* cloth, old fellow," said Ewen, thawing visibly, "but it was the cavalry all the same that broke his heart and his pride, and made his life the wreck it is, and drove him from his home, shunning the sight of his fellow-men, all these years,—exiling *her*, too, in the prime of her young life. Mr. Perry, there are only three or four of us at Dunraven who know the story, but *we* have only sympathy and pity—no blame—for him, though he is the harshest master I ever served."

"How did it happen?" asked Perry.

"All through his son. There had been more of them, but there was only the one—Archie—when the Lancers were ordered to South Africa. He was a youngster, only seventeen, they tell me, and he had just been gazetted to his cornetcy. The old man was all wrapped up in him, for of the three boys the eldest had died only the month before the regiment was ordered on foreign service and the second had been killed in India. Both these two who were gone had made themselves famous among their comrades by their fearlessness and high character, and the old man, of course, could not ask Archie to quit the service just when orders for dangerous duty came. The boy went to the Cape with his corps, and got into the thick of the Zulu war just at the time of the massacre of the 24th at Isandlwana and the fight at Rorke's Drift. I was at home then, and all England was quivering with grief over such needless sacrifice as was made of that regiment, and all ready

to fall down and worship such fellows as Chard and Bromhead, who made the superb fight almost at the same time. They say old Maitland wanted to go himself, as volunteer or something, with Lord Chelmsford, but it couldn't be done. His father had fought at Alma and Inkerman, and his grandfather had led the Guards at Waterloo. The whole tribe were soldiers, you know; and now Archie was with the Lancers in Zululand, and the Lancers were going to wipe out the disasters of the first fights of the campaign, and Archie was to uphold the grand old fighting name and come home covered with glory. He was the heir now, and Miss Gladys was but a little girl. I have heard it all from Mrs. Cowan: she was their housekeeper in those days, and a sort of companion, too, to Mrs. Maitland, who was very delicate. The old man was very fiery and proud, and full of fierce denunciation of everything that had gone wrong in the campaign; and he offended some people by the way he condemned some officer who was a friend of theirs, and there were others who thought he talked too much; but he fairly boiled over when the news came of how the Prince Imperial had been abandoned by his escort, and that a British officer and a dozen men had run two miles at top speed from a beggarly little squad of niggers before they dared look round to see what had become of their prince, whom they had left to fight the gang alone. That was old Maitland's text for a month. If any son of his had ever been of that party he would disown, disgrace, deny him, forbid him his sight, cut him off forever. And right in the midst of it all—a judgment, some people said—there came the awful news that Cornet Maitland of the Lancers was to be court-martialled for misbehavior in face of the enemy. Of course the old man only raged at first,—said it couldn't be true,—'twas all some foul invention or ridiculous blunder; but he ran up to London and saw somebody at the Horse-Guards,—that's our War Office, you know,—and came back looking a century older and simply crushed to earth. Mrs. Cowan says they showed him the official report of a general officer who was called upon to explain why he had not sent certain troops to the relief of an advanced and threatened post, and he replied that he had sent the order by Cornet Maitland of the Lancers, had given him an escort of a dozen men and strict injunctions to push through by night, at all hazards, though the way was beset with Zulus, and that he neither went through nor returned, but was found hiding at a kraal two days after, only twenty miles away. The escort returned, and after much cross-examination had told the story, separately and collectively, that the young officer had become utterly unnerved towards midnight by the reports from scouting-parties and others, had declared to them that it was simply madness to attempt to push through,—they would be massacred to a man,—and, though they announced that they were stanch and ready, he refused, and ordered them to bivouac where they were for the night; and in the morning he had disappeared. They declared they supposed he had gone back to camp, and, after waiting a day, they returned, reporting him lost. When found at the kraal he was delirious with fever, or pretended to be, said the general, and he was brought in under arrest, and the trial was to proceed. I don't know how it turned

out. He was not court-martialled, but permitted to return to England. It was said he told a very different story,—that he had begged the brigade major who detailed the escort to let him have half a dozen of his own Lancers instead of the pack of irregulars they gave him; he did not trust them, and feared they would abandon him as they had the Prince; but the staff-officer said the order couldn't be changed,—these men knew the country, and all that sort of thing, you know; and there was one fellow in the Lancers who stuck to it that he believed Maitland had tried his best to get through alone. But 'twas all useless: somebody had to be held responsible, and the failure was all heaped on him. Meantime, there had been fury at home; old Maitland had written casting him off, repudiating,—cursing him, for all I know,—and the next thing there came a messenger from the captain of his ship at Southampton. They brought his watch, his ring, his sword and portmanteaus, and a letter which was written on receipt of that his father sent him,—a long letter, that the old man never read to any living soul, but broods over to this day. The young fellow bade them all good-by; he would not live to disgrace them further, if that was what was thought of him at home, and leaped overboard from the steamer the night after she weighed anchor,—no one aboard could tell just when, but he was writing in his state-room as she cleared the harbor, and the steward saw him undressing at nine o'clock. In the morning everything about his belongings was found in perfect order,—his letter to the captain of the ship, the portmanteaus, watch, ring, clothing, etc., just as he described in that letter,—and he was no more seen. It was the conviction of all that he must have leaped overboard in the darkness when far out at sea.

"Then Mrs. Maitland bowed her head and never lifted it again. Then, all alone, and fiercely rejecting anything like sympathy, old Maitland took to travel,—came here to America, wandered around the world, shunning men as he would these prairie-wolves; and when he had to go to England he would see no one but the attorneys and solicitors with whom he had business. Here at Dunraven he is more content than anywhere, because he is farther from the world. Here Gladys is queen: 'twas she who named it, two years ago, for her mother was a connection of the earl's. But Maitland even here hates to have his name mentioned; and that is why I say he refers all business to me and keeps himself out of everything. Do you see what a weight he carries?"

Mr. Ewen had grown red with the intensity and rapidity of his talk. He removed his hat and mopped his face and brow with a big silk handkerchief, and then glanced again at Perry, who had listened with absorbed interest and who was now silently thinking it over, looking curiously at Ewen the while.

"Have I bored you half to death?" asked the Englishman, somewhat ruefully. "I never told that story before, but it has been smouldering for years."

"Bored? No! I never was more interested in my life. I was thinking what a different sort of fellow you were from the man I met out yonder the other day. Did they never do anything to clear the

matter up? In our country it never would have been allowed to rest there."

"It was too far gone; and when the boy killed himself the thing was used by all the government papers—you'd call them 'administration organs'—as a confession of judgment. When the Lancers came home there was some talk, but it was soon hushed. Maitland had shut up the old place by that time and gone no one knew where, but I read it in one of the London papers,—*Truth*, I think,—a story that two of the irregulars had quarrelled with their fellows and after the war was over told a tale that made a sensation in Cape Colony. They said that the young officer was a maligned man; that up to midnight he had pushed on, but every scout and patrol they met warned them that thousands of Zulus were ahead, and that it was madness to try. The men began whispering among themselves, and begged the sergeant to attempt to dissuade the Lancer officer; and he did, and they all began to talk, but he refused to listen. At last they halted at a little stream and flatly refused to go a step farther. He ordered, begged, and implored. He promised heavy reward to any one of their number who would come and show him the way. Then they heard the night cries or signals of some war-parties across the fields, and the sergeant and most of the men put spurs to their horses; the others followed, and they rode back five miles until they were within our patrolled lines; then they bivouacked, supposing of course the Lancer had followed them. But he hadn't: he never joined them all next day, and likely as not he had done his best to get through that strange country by night, alone, and had tried to carry his despatches to the detachment. They knew they must tell a straight story or be severely punished. They were twelve against one when it came to evidence, as the sergeant pointed out, and so they agreed on the one that sent him to Coventry.

"Some of the Lancer officers got hold of this and swore they believed it true; but meantime the government had had the devil's own time in tiding his lordship the general over the numerous blunders he had made in the campaign, and the Lancers were summarily ordered off elsewhere. There was no one left to take up poor Archie's cause at home, and the thing died out."

"By the Lord Harry, Mr. Ewen, it wouldn't die out here! We Yankees would resurrect such a thing if it were old as a mummy."

"Sometimes I think old Maitland would be glad of the chance to do it, even broken as he is; sometimes, Mrs. Cowan says, he walks the floor all night and holds Archie's last letter in his hands. *She* thinks he charges himself with having driven the boy to suicide."

"Does Miss Maitland never revisit the old home?" asked Perry, after a moment's thought.

"She goes with her father—everywhere. He is never here more than twice a year, and seldom for more than six weeks at a time. Were it not for her, though, he would settle down here, I believe. He went to Cape Colony and tried to find the men who gave out that story, but one of them was dead and the other had utterly disappeared. There were still six survivors of that escort, the sergeant among them, and he was a man of some position and property. They stuck to the

original story, and said the two men who started the sensation were mere blackmailing vagrants. Maitland advertised everywhere for the missing man, but to no purpose. I think he and Miss Gladys have finally abandoned all hope of ever righting Archie's name. She was only a child when it all happened, but she worshipped him, and never for an instant has believed the story of his having funkcd. She's out here riding somewhere this morning, by the way."

"Who! Miss Maitland?" exclaimed Perry, with sudden start, and a flash of eager light in his blue eyes.

Ewen smiled quietly as he answered, "Yes. She needed exercise, and wanted to come down to the gate and meet Dr. Quin. She went on up the valley; and I wonder she is not back."

The bright light faded quickly as it came; the glad blue eyes clouded heavily. Ewen looked at the young soldier, surprise in his florid face,—surprise that quickly deepened into concern, for Perry turned suddenly away, as though looking for his comrades of the hunt.

"I think they're coming now," said the manager, peering up the valley under the shading willows. "Yes! Won't you stop a bit?"

"Not now," was the hurried reply. "Thank you for that story: it has given me a lot to think about. I'll see you again." The last words were almost shouted back; for, urged by sudden dig of the spur, Nolan indignantly lashed his heels, then rushed in wrathful gallop towards the eastern bluffs. It was no wilful pang his rider had inflicted on his pet and comrade; it was only the involuntary transmission of the shock to his own young heart,—a cruel, jealous stab, that came with those thoughtless words, "She wanted to come down to the gate and meet Dr. Quin, and went on up the valley." He would not even look back and see her riding by that man's side.

XII.

To use the expression of Mr. Dana, "Ned Perry seemed off his feed" for a day or two. The hunt had been pronounced a big success, despite the fact of Perry's defection,—he had not even joined them at luncheon,—and it was agreed that it should be repeated the first bright day after muster. That ceremony came off on Monday with due pomp and formality and much rigidity of inspection on the part of the post commander. It was watched with interest by the ladies, and Mrs. Belknap even proposed that when the barracks and kitchens were being visited they should go along. Dana had been her devotee ever since the day of the hunt, and announced his willingness to carry her suggestion to the colonel, but Belknap declined. She wanted a few words with Perry, and did not know how to effect her purpose. When he stopped and spoke to her after parade on Saturday evening and would have made peace, she thought to complete her apparent conquest by a show of womanly displeasure at his conduct, and an assurance that, thanks to Mr. Dana, the day had been delightful and *his* failure to accompany her had been of no consequence at all. The utterly unexpected way in which he took it was simply a "stunner" to the little lady. So far from being piqued and jealous and huffy, as she

expected, Mr. Perry justified the oft-expressed opinion of her sisterhood to the effect that "men were simply past all comprehension" by brightening up instantly and expressing such relief at her information that for a moment she was too dazed to speak. By that time he had pleasantly said good-night and vanished; nor had he been near her since, except to bow and look pleased when she walked by with Dana. She never thought of him as an actor before, but this, said Mrs. Belknap to herself, *looks* like consummate acting. Had she known of, or even suspected, the existence of a woman who had interposed and cast her into the shade, the explanation would have occurred to her at once; but that there was a goddess in the shape of Gladys Maitland within a day's ride of Rossiter she never dreamed for an instant. Believing that no other woman could have unseated her, Mrs. Belknap simply *could* not account for such utter—such unutterable—complacency on the part of her lately favored admirer in his virtual dismissal. All Sunday and Monday she looked for signs of sulking or surrender, but looked in vain. Perry seemed unusually grave and silent, was Parke's report of the situation; but whatever comfort she might have derived from that knowledge was utterly destroyed by the way he brightened up and looked pleased whenever they chanced to meet. Monday evening he stopped to speak with her on the walk, holding out his hand and fairly beaming upon her: she icily received these demonstrations, but failed to chill them or him. Then she essayed to make him suffer the pangs of the jilted by clinging to Dana's arm and smiling up in Dana's face, and then she suddenly started: "Oh, Mr. Dana! How could I have been so thoughtless?—and this is your wounded side!" Dana protested that her slight weight was soothing balm, not additional pain, and Perry promptly asseverated that if he were Dana he would beg her not to quit his arm, and her eyes looked scorn at him as she said, "How can you know anything about it, Mr. Perry? You've never been in action or got a scratch, while Mr. Dana"—and now the dark eyes spoke volumes as they looked up into those of her escort—"Mr. Dana is one of the heroes of the fighting days of the regiment." Even *that* failed to crush him; while it had the effect of making Dana feel mawkish and absurd. Perry frankly responded that he only wondered the women ever could find time to show any civility whatever to fellows like him, when there were so many who "had records." She was completely at a loss to fathom him, and when tattoo came on Monday night, and they were all discussing the project of a run with the hounds for the coming morrow,—a May-day celebration on new principles,—Mrs. Belknap resolved upon a change of tactics.

Dana was officer of the guard and over at the guard-house, but nearly all the other officers were chatting about the veranda and the gate of the colonel's quarters. Thither had Captain Belknap escorted his pretty wife, and she was, as usual, the centre of an interested group. Perry came strolling along after reporting the result of tattoo roll-call to the adjutant, and Captain Stryker called to him and asked some question about the men on stable-guard. The orders of the colonel with regard to watching the movements of the men after the night roll-call were being closely observed, and when the trumpets sounded "taps," a few

moments later, several of the troop-commanders walked away together, and this left a smaller party. It was just at this juncture that Mrs. Belknap's sweet voice was heard addressing the commanding officer:

"Oh, colonel! Ever since Thursday I have been telling Captain Belknap about those lovely albums of yours; and he is so anxious to see them. *Could* he have a look at them to-night?"

"Why, certainly!" exclaimed the colonel, all heartiness and pleasure. "Come right in, Belknap, come in,—any of you,—all of you,—where it's good and light." And he hospitably held open the screen door. Perry had seen the albums a dozen times, but he was for going in with the others, when he felt a little hand-pressure on his arm, and Mrs. Belknap's great dark eyes were gazing up into his with mournful, incredulous appeal.

"Don't you know I want to see you?" she murmured so that only he could hear. "Wait!"

And, much bewildered, Mr. Perry waited.

She stood where she could look through the screen door into the parlor beyond, watching furtively until the party were grouped under the hanging lamps and absorbed in looking over one another's shoulders at the famous albums; then, beckoning to him to follow, she flitted, like some eerie sprite, on tiptoe to the southern end of the veranda, where clustering vines hid her from view from the walk along the parade. Perry began to feel queer, as he afterwards expressed it, but he stalked along after her, declining to modulate the thunder of his heavy heels upon the resounding gallery. She put her finger to her lips, and, after a nervous glance around, looked at him warningly, beseechingly.

"What on earth's the matter?" was all the perplexed and callow youth could find to say, and in a tone so utterly devoid of romance, sentiment, tenderness,—anything she wanted to hear,—that in all her experience—and she had had not a little—pretty, bewitching little Mrs. Belknap could recall nothing so humiliating.

"How *can* you be so unkind to me?" at last she whispered, in the tragic tremolo she well knew to be effective: it had done execution over and again. But big, handsome Ned Perry looked only like one in a maze; then he bent over her in genuine concern:

"Why, Mrs. Belknap! What *has* happened? What has gone wrong? What *do* you mean by unkindness?"

She faced him, indignantly now: "Is it possible you profess not to know?"

"By all that's holy, Mrs. Belknap, I haven't an idea of what you mean to charge me with. Tell me, and I'll make every amend I know how."

He was bending over her in genuine distress and trouble: he had no thought but to assure her of his innocence of any conscious wrong. She was leaning upon the balcony rail, and he rested one strong hand upon the post at the shaded corner, above her head, as he bowed his own to catch her reply.

For a moment she turned her face away, her bosom heaving, her little hands clasping nervously, the picture of wronged and sorrowing

womanhood. His blunt, rugged honesty was something she had never yet had to deal with. This indeed was "game worth the candle," but something of a higher order than the threadbare flirtations she had found so palatable heretofore. She had expected him to be revealed by this time as the admirer who had only been playing a part in his apparent acceptance of the situation of the last two days; she expected to be accused of coquetting with Dana, of neglect, coldness, insult towards himself; and this she would have welcomed: it would have shown him still a victim in her toils, a mouse she might toy and play with indefinitely before bestowing the final *coup de grâce*. But instead of it, or anything like it, here stood the tall, handsome young fellow, utterly ignoring the possibility of her having wronged him, and only begging to be told how he had affronted her, that he might make immediate amends. It was simply exasperating. She turned suddenly upon him, hiding her face in her hands, almost sobbing:

"And I thought we were such—such friends!"

Even that suggestive tentative did not lay him prostrate. Fancy the utter inadequacy of his response:

"Why, so did I!" This was too much. Down came the hands, and were laid in frantic appeal upon his breast. He did not bar the way; she could have slipped from the corner without difficulty; but the other method was more dramatic.

"Let me go, Mr. Perry," she pleaded. "I—I might have known; I might have known." The accents were stifled, heart-rending.

"Don't go yet, Mrs. Belknap; don't go without telling me what—what I've done." And poor Ned imploringly seized the little hands in both his and held them tight. "Please tell me," he pleaded.

"No, no! You would not understand; you do not see what I have to bear. Let me go, I beg,—please. I cannot stay." And her great dark eyes, swimming in tears, were raised to his face, while with faint—very faint—struggles she strove to pull her hands away, relenting in her purpose to go the moment she felt that he was relaxing the hold in which they were clasped, but suddenly wrenching them from his breast and darting from his side, leaving Perry in much bewilderment to face about and confront the doctor.

A little opening had been left in the railing at the south end of the veranda,—the same through which the post surgeon had passed the night Mrs. Lawrence had shown to Perry the answering signal-light: it was the doctor's "short cut" between the colonel's quarters and his own side-door, and soft, unbetraying turf lay there between. Absorbed in her melodrama, Mrs. Belknap had failed to note the coming of the intruder; absorbed in his own stupefaction and his fair partner's apparent depth of woe, Ned Perry heard nothing but her soft words and softer sighs, until a deep voice at his shoulder—a voice whose accent betrayed no apology for the discovery and less sympathy for the discovered—gave utterance to this uncompromising sentiment:

"Mrs. Belknap, this is the thirtieth—not the first—of 'April.'"

"And what has that to do with your sudden appearance, Dr. Quin?" answered the lady, with smiling lips but flashing eyes. She rallied from the shock of sudden volley like the veteran she was, and took the

brunt of the fight on her own white, gleaming shoulders, needing no aid from the young fellow who stood there, flushing, annoyed, yet too perturbed to say a word even had there been a chance to get one in edgewise. Blunt as he was, he could not but realize the awkwardness of the situation. And to be so misjudged by such a man as Dr. Quin! All this was flashing through his mind as the doctor answered,—

"Nothing with *my* appearance, Mrs. Belknap: it was *yours* I remarked upon. You seemed to think it All Fools' Day."

"Far from it, doctor, when I thought you miles away."

"Well, well, Mrs. Belknap," said Quin, shrugging his broad shoulders and laughing at her undaunted pluck, "I've known you fifteen years, and never have found you at a loss for a sharp retort."

"In all the years you *have* known me, doctor, as child, as maid, as woman, you are the only man in the army who ever put me on the defensive. I see clearly that you would taunt me because of this interview with Mr. Perry. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, Dr. Quin! You are the last man in this garrison—cavalry and all—who can afford to throw stones."

"Whew-w-w" whistled the doctor. "What a little spitfire you always were, to be sure!—Mr. Perry," said he, turning suddenly on the young officer, "let me at once apologize for a very misleading observation. When I spoke of having known Mrs. Belknap fifteen years she instantly thought I meant to make her out very much older than she is; and hence these recriminations. She always objected to me because I used to tease her when she was in her first long dresses,—the prettiest girl at Fort Leavenworth,—and she's never gotten over it. But her father and I were good friends, and I should like to be an honest one to his daughter. Good-night to you both."

"One moment, Dr. Quin," said Perry, springing forward. "You have seen fit to make comments and insinuations that have annoyed Mrs. Belknap at a time when she was under my escort——"

"Oh, Mr. Perry, no! no!" exclaimed Mrs. Belknap, laying her hand on his arm. "Not a word of that kind, I implore! *Hush!* here comes my husband."

"Ah, Belknap," said the doctor, blandly, as the big captain came hurriedly forth with searching glance along the dark gallery, "here you find me, as usual, trying to be devoted to Mrs. B. whenever I can get you out of the way. Why the jeuce can't you stay?"

"Oh, it's you, is it, doctor?" answered the captain, in tones of evident relief. "It is far too chilly for this young woman to be sitting here without a wrap, is it not? Come inside, Dolly. Come, doctor.—Halloo! what's that?"

A cavalry trumpeter came springing through the gate and up on the veranda.

"Is Captain Stryker here?" he panted.

"No. What's the matter?" demanded Perry.

"Trouble at the stables, sir. Sergeant Gwynne's assaulted again."

Perry sprang from the veranda and went tearing across the dark level of the parade as fast as active legs could carry him, leaving the doctor far behind. As he passed the company quarters he noted that

several men were leaping from their broad galleries, some just pulling on a blouse, others in their shirt-sleeves, but all hastening towards the stables, where dim lights could be seen flitting about like will-o'-the-wisps. One of these troopers came bounding to his side, and would have passed him in the race. He recognized the athletic form even in the darkness, and hailed him :

"That you, Sergeant Leary? What's gone wrong?"

"It's thim blackguards from below, sir. Who else could it be?"

"Those people at the ranch?"

"The very ones, sir. No one else would harm Sergeant Gwynne. Sure we ought to have wound 'em up the one night we had a chance, sir."

Breathless, almost, they reached the stables. The horses were all snorting, stamping, and plunging about in their stalls, showing every indication of excitement and alarm. From the stables of the adjoining companies other men had come with lanterns, and a group of perhaps half a dozen troopers was gathered about the form of a cavalry sergeant who was seated, limp and exhausted, at the western door-way. One soldier was bathing his face with a sponge; the first sergeant of the troop was bending over and trying to feel the pulse.

"Stand back, you men!" he said, authoritatively, as he caught sight of the lieutenant's shoulder-straps. "Leave a lantern here.—Now, Gwynne, here's Lieutenant Perry. Can you tell him who it was?"

Gwynne feebly strove to rise, but Perry checked him.

"Sit down! The doctor is coming; don't attempt to move," panted the young officer. "Tell me what *you* know about it, Sergeant Hosmer."

"Nothing but this, sir. I was in the office, when Trumpeter Petersen ran in and said they were killing Sergeant Gwynne. I sent him for the captain and grabbed my revolver and ran here as hard as I could. He was lying just outside the door when I got here, and not another soul in sight. Sergeant Ross, of F Troop, and Sergeant Fagan, of B, came with their lanterns from the stables next door; but they had not even heard the trouble."

"Where was the stable-guard?"

"Inside, sir, and he's there now. He heard the scuffle, he says, and ran to give the alarm and to protect the sergeant, but the men scattered when he came, and he saw none of them."

"Tell him to come here. Let some of these men go in and quiet the horses. The captain will be here in a minute, and he will want to see that stable-man. Who is it?"

"Kelly, sir."

By this time Dr. Quin came lumbering heavily up the slope to the stable door. His manner was very quiet and very grave as he bent over the injured man and carefully studied his face by the light of the sergeant's lamp. Gwynne partially opened his eyes and turned his head as though the glare were too painful. The doctor spoke gently :

"You know me, sergeant?—Dr. Quin. Can you tell me what struck you? Are you hurt elsewhere than in the head?"

Gwynne made no reply for a moment, then faintly answered,—

"Stunned, mainly, and one or two kicks after I was knocked down."

Then came a deeper voice, quiet but authoritative, and the group that had begun to close in again about the doctor and his patient fell back as Captain Stryker strode into their midst.

"Sergeant Hosmer, send all these men of the troop back to their quarters at once, and permit no more to come out.—Is he much hurt, doctor?"

"Somewhat stunned, he says. I've made no examination yet."

The captain looked about him. Except one sergeant holding a lantern, the other troopers, obedient to his order, were slowly fading back into the darkness on their way to the barracks. Only the doctor, Mr. Perry, and the sergeant remained by the side of the injured man. Then came the question,—

"Who did this, Gwynne?"

No answer. A deeper shade of pain and trouble seemed to pass over the young sergeant's face. He made an effort to speak, hesitated, and at last replied,—

"I cannot say, sir."

"You know, do you not?"

Again pained silence and embarrassment. At last the sergeant leaned slowly forward and spoke:

"Captain, the men were masked, the voices disguised. I could not see the dress in the darkness. I was struck on the head almost the instant I got outside the door, and it would be impossible for me to identify one of them."

"Do you think it was the same gang you had the trouble with at Dunraven?"

"I—could not say, sir."

"Do you suspect any of our own men?"

"I—would not say that, sir."

"Where is the stable-guard?" asked Stryker. "Send him here."

And presently Trooper Kelly—a wiry little Irishman, with a twinkling eye and an expression of mingled devilment and imperturbability in his face—came forth from the stable door and stood attention, awaiting his examination.

"Where were you when this assault took place, Kelly?"

"At the far end of the stables, sir," replied Kelly, with prompt and confident tone.

"Then of course you saw and know nothing of it."

"Not a wor-rad, sir."

"Why did you let a gang from that English ranch come here and beat your sergeant before your very eyes?"

Kelly reddened at the very idea:

"I'd ha' died first, sir! Sure they'd niver dared——" And then Kelly stopped short. His Celtic pride had been touched to the quick, and had it not proved too much for even Irish wit?

"How did they get the sergeant out of the stable at this hour of the night?"

"Sure they called him out, sir."

"And the sergeant happened to be down there by the door at the time?"

"No, sir: he was in his room, beyant,—up there by the forage."

"That's a long distance from this door, Kelly; and if he could hear it in his room you could hear it farther away."

"I wasn't farther away thin, sir: I was down here when they axed for him."

"Then why didn't you open the door and see who was making such a racket, shouting for Sergeant Gwynne after taps?"

"Sure they didn't shout at all at all, sir; they axed for him quiet and respectable like, an' I wint and told him."

"Ah, yes, I see. And then, having told him, you went away to the far end of the stable."

"Yis, sir,—just so, sir; an' the moment I heard the scrimmidge, sir, I ran as hard as I could."

"Of course you considered it was none of your business what people might want with the stable-sergeant at night."

"No, sir. If he wanted me he had a right to tell me to come."

"We differ on that point, Kelly," said the captain, quietly. "For a guard, you displayed a lack of curiosity that is simply fatal.—Relieve him, Sergeant Hosmer," he continued, placidly, and then, taking Perry by the arm, led him to one side. There was a few minutes' low-toned talk between the officers while Gwynne was being led away by the doctor, and when on the following morning Colonel Brainard looked over the report of Captain Stryker's troop he was surprised to note in the column of remarks explanatory of the alterations from the status of the previous day,—

"Sergeant Gwynne from daily duty as stable-sergeant to sick in hospital, Sergeant Leary from duty to arrest, and Private Kelly from duty to confinement."

XIII.

Notwithstanding the fact that there was an atmosphere of suppressed excitement over the garrison this May-day morning, Mrs. Belknap's hunt came off according to plan, and the three heroines of the previous run rode forth with but slight change of escort. Captain Stryker felt constrained to remain in garrison: he had a quiet investigation to make, and was observed to be in close conversation with Dr. Quin as the gay party assembled in front of Colonel Brainard's quarters. Mr. Perry appeared in his captain's stead, and very politely requested the honor of being escort to Mrs. Lawrence, who accepted, yet looked a trifle embarrassed as she did so. Indeed, not until she had stolen an appealing glance at her husband and heard his cordial "By all means, dear: Perry can guide you far better than I, and perhaps you'll win another mask," did she thankfully say "Yes." Dana rode with Mrs. Belknap, as before, and it was the colonel himself who suggested to Stryker that Mr. Perry should accompany Mrs. Lawrence this day, and that he, the colonel, should ride with Mrs. Sprague.

Perry had eagerly lent himself to the proposition: he figured that now he could have an uninterrupted chat with Mrs. Lawrence and hear

what she had to tell about Dunraven. Just before starting he sought Captain Lawrence, laughingly told him the terms of their agreement, and begged that he would relax his marital injunction and permit her to give him such details as she happened to be in possession of. "Indeed, Captain Lawrence," he said, "I ask from no idle curiosity. I have been to the ranch, as you now know, and have good reason for asking." To his surprise, the captain replied substantially that, while he had regretted Mrs. Lawrence's impulsive revelations, he had thought it all over and decided that the best way out was that Perry should be told the whole story and be able to see how very little there was to it. He had decided, therefore, to tell him himself; "and this evening, Perry, if you will dine with us informally, we'll talk it over afterwards. Meantime, I prefer Mrs. Lawrence's name should not be mentioned in connection with any story there may be afloat: so oblige me by saying nothing to her on the subject."

This was one matter for reflection, and something of a surprise; but there was still another, and even greater one. That very morning, just before guard-mount, and while he was dressing, Perry shouted, "Come in," responsive to a knock at his sitting-room door, and in came Captain Stryker. The object of his early call was explained in very few words.

"Perry," said he, "I have been over to see Sergeant Gwynne this morning, and the doctor walked back from hospital with me and told me of your threatened disagreement of last night. If it had not been for that sudden call to the stables I fancy there might have been a quarrel. Now, I think you know I'm one of the last men to let an officer of my regiment—especially my troop—be placed in a false position, and—you can afford to leave this matter in my hands, can you not?"

"Certainly, Captain Stryker."

"Then I want you to say nothing to Quin on the subject, and to treat him, as far as possible, as though nothing had happened. His relations with the lady's father and family were, and are, such that she ought to treat him with respect and deference, and to accept his advice even though it be given in a style that Carlyle, his favorite author, is mainly responsible for."

"There was absolutely nothing in—in that—— Well, captain," stammered poor Ned, "I don't know how to say what I want to say." He wanted to say there was nothing in that interview which could possibly be criticised, but it suddenly occurred to him that, on the contrary, there was a good deal. Then he desired to assure his captain that, so far as he was concerned, there wasn't a suspicion of wrongdoing; but—heavens and earth!—that was equivalent to saying the lady was doing all that was open to remark, and nothing would ever induce him to "give away a woman," as he would have expressed it. Perry stammered and reddened all the more, and at last gave it up in despair, Stryker sitting there the while with a quiet grin on his bronzed face, and mechanically slashing his boot-legs with a riding-switch.

"I think I understand the situation, Perry, and there's no great harm done. Only, let the matter drop,—so far as the doctor is con-

cerned, I mean: I do not presume to obtrude advice upon you as to anything else."

And, though he had meditated a different course, and had fully intended hunting up Dana and sending him with a note to call upon the doctor for an "explanation," he was glad to have a man of Stryker's standing cry halt. All the same he was sore incensed against Dr. Quin,—mainly because of the jealous pain he suffered at the knowledge of his being so welcomed by Gladys Maitland when he saw fit to visit the ranch; and this pain gnawed all the more angrily now at thought of the embarrassing—even suspicious—situation in which that very man had found him on the previous evening. Pressing duties and hurried preparations kept him from brooding too much upon these sore points, but the youngsters all rallied him upon his preoccupation while at their merry breakfast-table. He had resolved that there was one thing he could and would bring to an issue with Dr. Quin, and was all impatience for the coming of evening, that he might hear from the lips of Captain Lawrence the actual stories that had been in circulation concerning Dunraven Ranch. He never went out to a hunt so utterly indifferent to the fortunes of the day, so eager to have it all over and done with. And yet—and yet—never had there opened to him a day so radiant with glorious possibility; never before in all his young life had nightfall proved so unwelcome when it finally came.

The first rabbit was started before they were a mile from Rossiter, and the hounds tumbled over him nearly a league away down the valley of the Monee. It was while they were watering their horses in the stream that Mrs. Belknap rode up beside them and laughingly addressed Mrs. Lawrence:

"That was too much of a straight-away for either of us, Mrs. Lawrence; but what wager shall we have on the first mask after this?"

"Why, Mrs. Belknap! I can never hope to rival you. It was mere accident, and good guiding on the part of some of the officers who were kind enough to stay by me, that enabled me to be 'in at the death' the other day."

"You have Mr. Perry to lead you to-day. Surely with such a guide you ought to be inspired.—Am I to see *anything* of you to-day?" she almost whispered to him, as her stirrup brushed his riding-boot.

"Certainly," he answered, quietly, and looking her over with frank blue eyes that were rather too clear and calm for her mood. "If Mrs. Lawrence will excuse me a few moments by and by, it will be a pleasure to come and ride with you. I'll ask her."

"Indeed you shall not," was the low-toned reply, while the dark eyes fairly snapped with indignation. "I do not borrow other women's escort. If you know no other way, that ends it."

And then Mrs. Sprague's cheery voice had hailed them as her eager horse came splashing into the stream; no opportunity occurred for further impressive remarks, but as the "field" rode out upon the prairie again and the dogs spread their yelping skirmish-line along the front, Mrs. Belknap felt confident that before they returned to Rossiter she would have her big, simple-hearted admirer in some shape for discipline. Two capital runs added to her self-satisfaction, for in one of

them she was side by side with the foremost rider at the finish, and in both she had left the other women far in rear. Then came a third, and with it a revelation to one and all.

It was almost noon, and from a point well out on the prairie to the northeast of Dunraven the "field" was hunting slowly homeward, horses and hounds pretty well tired out, and the riders quite content with their morning's sport. Up to this time Perry had been in constant attendance on Mrs. Lawrence, and had made no effort to join Mrs. Belknap. Now, however, he could not but see that every little while her eyes sought his with significant glance and that she was riding well out to the left of the party, Dana faithfully hovering about her. The colonel with Mrs. Sprague ranged alongside just then, and a general conversation ensued, in the course of which Perry found himself a trifle in the way. If there was one thing fastidious Nolan did not like, it was to be crowded by horses for whom he had no particular respect; and, as a number of riders were grouped about Mrs. Lawrence at the moment, it resulted that Nolan's teeth and heels began to make play, and Perry laughingly resigned his position at her side, in order, as he expressed it, "to give you other fellows a chance." Even then, as he fell to the rear, it was with no thought or intention of joining Mrs. Belknap. But, once clear of the merry group, his eyes sought the distant outlines of Dunraven Ranch, glaring in the noonday sun beyond the Monee, and between him and that mysterious enclosure whither his thoughts were so constantly wandering there rode the dainty lady, the Queen of the Chase, so far as that day was concerned at least, and she was signalling to him with her riding-whip. Oddly enough, when Perry rode up to obey her summons, Mr. Dana presently found means to excuse himself and join the main body.

"Mr. Perry," she said, as soon as Dana was out of hearing, "Mrs. Page will be with us to-night, or to-morrow morning at latest."

"Will she?" answered he, unconscious, forgetful, and with an air of pleased anticipation. "How pleasant for you! I'll come and pay my respects the very first thing."

"You do not understand," was the reproachful response. "You do not care, I presume; but this means that you and I will have no more long talks and happy times together."

"I'm awfully sorry, Mrs. Belknap, but I'm blessed if I can see why we shouldn't."

"No," despairingly, "it is plain enough that you see nothing. Ah, well!"—and the sigh was pathetic-profound, and the look from the dark eyes was unutterable in its sadness, "I suppose it is better so,—better so." She was silent a moment, and Perry's puzzled faculties took refuge in a long look over towards Dunraven again: he fancied he saw figures moving down the slope on the southern side.

"One thing I want you to promise me," she presently said, sad and soft and low. There was no reply. Looking up, she saw his head was averted. Was he feeling the sting, then, after all? Was he actually suffering a little pang after this affectation of nonchalance?

"One thing you must promise, for my sake," she repeated.

And still no answer came. How odd! He was bending over in

the saddle as though turning from her,—perhaps to hide his face from her and from them all. He had shifted the reins into his right hand, and was apparently fumbling at the breast of his riding-coat with the left. Was it the handkerchief he needed? Were there starting tears in those blue eyes that he dared not let her see? She could not lose that luxury! Out went the little hand and touched his arm. Her tone was sweet, thrilling, appealing, yet commanding: she *would* see his face.

"Mr. Perry,—*Ned!* Look at me."

"Eh! oh! What! I *beg* your pardon, Mrs. Belknap, but I was trying to make out who that was in the timber yonder. Looks—looks almost like a woman on horseback, doesn't it?"

But when he appealed to her for confirmation of his timid, half-credulous vision he was aghast at the look in her face.

"You were not listening! You were not even *thinking* of what I was saying!" she began, her white teeth set, her soft lips livid with wrath; but she suddenly controlled herself,—none too soon, for Dana came trotting up.

"Say, Perry, what do you make that out to be down there in the valley? Colonel Brainard and I feel sure it's a lady on horseback."

And, looking at Perry, Mrs. Belknap saw that he had flushed to the very temples,—that an eager, joyous light had sprung to his eyes; but before she could say a word there came a shout from the huntsman, a yell from the leading line, a simultaneous yelp from the curs and mongrels among the "irregulars," and her horse leaped at the bit and went tearing off towards the Monee, foremost in mad pursuit of a wildly careering "jack."

"Come!" she called, as she glanced over her shoulder; but the sight was one that only added to her wrath. Nolan, plunging and snorting, was held to the spot, while his rider, sitting like a centaur, was still eagerly gazing over into the distant cottonwoods. The next instant she realized that all the field were thundering at her heels, and the instinct of the sportsman came to her aid. She *could* not be beaten in the chase.

For half a mile Bunny shot like a streak of light straight away southwestward, the hounds bunched in a slaty, sweeping cloud not thirty yards behind the bobbing tuft of his tail. Then he began a long circle towards the stream, as though to head for a "break" that extended some rods back from the line of bluffs. Another minute, and he had reached its partial shelter and darted in. For the next minute he was lost to sight of his human pursuers, but presently flashed into view again down in the creek-bottom and "streaking it" up along the northern bank, with the whole pack at his heels. The bluffs were steep just here, some of the riders a trifle timid, and all the "field" reined in a little as they made the descent; Dana, Mrs. Belknap, Parke, Mrs. Lawrence, Graham, the colonel, and Mrs. Sprague straightened out for their pursuit in the order named the instant they reached the level of the valley. The hounds were far ahead by this time, and the two light troopers in charge of them close at their heels; but who—what was the figure that flashed into view between those huntsmen and the field,

darting like arrow from the fringe of willows and dashing straight in wake of the quarry? Thirty yards ahead of the foremost riders of the Rossiter party a superb English hunter, the bit in his teeth, his eyes afire and his head high in air, fresh, vigorous, raging with long-imprisoned passion for the sport of the old island home, gaining on the hounds at every stride, and defying the utmost efforts of his rider, leaped from the covert of the timber into sight of one and all, bearing a lovely but most reluctant victim on his back.

In vain with might and main she leaned back and tugged at the reins: though checked in his speed, the horse still tore ahead, keeping straight for the hounds, leaping in his easy stride every little gully or "branch" that crossed his path. Bunny took a sudden dive into the timber, fairly flew across a narrow, gravelly rapid, and darted up on the opposite bank; the hounds veered in pursuit, the huntsmen wavered and sought along the bank for a better place to cross, but the mettlesome English bay lunged through in the very wake of the hounds, crumbling the sandy banks and crashing through the pebbly stream-bed. Out on the southern slopes went Bunny, close followed by the hounds; out on their trail went the big hunter, but his rider's hat has been brushed away in the wild dash through the timber, and now a flame of beautiful golden hair—a great wave of light—flies on the wind over his glossy back, and, though she still leans over the cantle tugging hard at the reins, she is plainly losing strength. Some of the Rossiter party burst through the timber in pursuit; some still ride hopefully up the north bank, and these are rewarded, for once again poor, badgered, bewildered Bunny makes a sudden swerve, and, throwing half the hounds far behind, darts a second time to the shelter of the banks, with the other half closer at his heels than before. Those who are watching see the big hunter make a long, circular sweep, then once again bring up in the wake of the leaders, once more go leaping, plunging, crashing through the stream, and, in another minute, rabbit, hounds, huntsmen, the "field," and the fair incognita are all strung out in chase along the northern shore, and all eyes can see that *she* is an English girl and wellnigh exhausted. Still, no man can catch that hunter and lay hands on the rein. She is riding with the very foremost now, leading the troopers, even, and still Bunny spins along in front, the hounds gnashing not six feet behind him. A little point of bluff juts out just ahead; the stream winds around its base and takes a turn northward for a dozen rods. Bunny shoots the turn like the pilot of the lightning express, the hounds strain to make it without loss of vantage gained, the big hunter sways outward to the very verge of the steep and crumbling bank, and a groan goes up from the breathless pursuers; but he rallies and straightens once more in the track, and the golden hair, streaming in the advance, is the *oriflamme* of the chase. Then as they round the point Dana gives a shout of joy. Straight down the slopes, straight and swift as rode the daring hussar from whom he got his name, when he bore the fatal message like arrow-flight from the Sapouné crest at Balaklava, down the bluffs to the right front comes Nolan, with Ned Perry on his back,—Perry with set, resolute, yet almost frenzied face,—Perry with eyes that flash blue fire in the in-

tensity of their gaze,—and Nolan's vigorous strides have brought him in circling sweep, in just ten seconds more, close to the hunter's quarter, close behind the fluttering skirt. Just ahead there is another sudden turn to the left: the stream goes one way, the bluffs another, and between them lies a five-acre patch of level prairie thickly studded, here, there, everywhere, with tiny earthen mounds and tiny, gaping, treacherous holes,—a prairie-dog village, by all that's awful! and that runaway hunter, mad in the chase of the sweeping hounds, is in the midst of it before mortal hand can check or swerve him. Another second, and they who pursue have veered to right or left or reined up on the verge,—all save one. Never faltering, Ned Perry is at her hunter's quarter,—almost at her side. They see him spurring, they see him bending eagerly towards her, they see that he is shouting something to her,—Heaven knows what! Then there is a groan of misery and dread from a dozen breasts,—a groan that as suddenly bursts into the gladdest of cheers: the hunter's forefoot has caught in one of the thousand little death-traps; down he goes, plunging, heaving, quivering, rolling over and over; but Nolan leaps gallantly ahead, and Ned Perry's strong arm has lifted the girl from the saddle as her steed goes crashing to earth, and bears her, drooping, faint, frightened, wellnigh senseless, but safe and clasped tight to his thankful and exultant heart.

Another instant, and Nolan is reined in in the very midst of the tumbling hounds, and Gladys Maitland is the only woman "in at the death."

XIV.

The group that gathers there a moment later is as interested a party as the central figures are interesting. Unable to set her left foot to the ground, and still encircled by Perry's arm, Miss Maitland stands leaning heavily on his breast. She is very pale for a moment, partly from exhaustion, partly from pain, for there was no time to free her foot from the stirrup, and the ankle is severely wrenched. Nolan, riderless now and cast loose, stands with lowered head and heaving flanks a sympathetic but proudly heroic looker-on: he knows he has played his part in that rescue. The huge English hunter is plunging in misery among the mounds a few yards back, his fore-leg broken. One of the troopers has seized his bridle, and another is unstrapping the heavy English saddle. "Splendidly done!" says the colonel, as he trots carefully up, casting a glance at the fallen cause of all the mischief, "but if that saddle had been one of those three-pronged abominations he couldn't have swept her off as he did." Graham has galloped to the stream for water, and the colonel lifts Mrs. Sprague from her saddle, and together they advance to offer sympathy and aid. Mrs. Lawrence follows as quickly as she can pick her way among the prairie-dog holes. Dana has deserted Mrs. Belknap, and she alone remains mounted while all these others throng about the two who stand there for the moment, clinging to each other. And now Gladys Maitland has raised her head; blushes of shame and confusion triumph over pallor and pain; she strives to stand alone, but Perry bids her desist. The moment she sees Mrs. Sprague's sweet, womanly, sympa-

thetic face her eyes are filled with comfort and her heart goes out to her. Most reluctantly Perry resigns his prize to the arms that open to receive her, and then come the wondering exclamations of some, and the brief, breathless explanations.

"Don't try to talk yet," pleads Mrs. Sprague. "We are only too glad it was no worse."

"Indeed, I'm not hurt," answers Gladys, bravely,—“only a little wrench, but,” and she laughs nervously, trying to carry it off with all the pluck and spirit of her race, “it would have been what we call a ‘nasty cropper’ at home if”—and her eyes turn shyly yet with a world of gratitude to his—“it had not been for Mr. Perry.”

"Oh, then you know Mr. Perry!" exclaims Mrs. Sprague, with frank delight, and Mrs. Lawrence turns in rejoicing to look first in his glowing face, then at the dark beauty of Mrs. Belknap silently listening. "Why, we had no idea——" And she concludes irresolutely.

"Oh, yes: we met at the ranch,—at home. I am Miss Maitland, you know; and that is my father's place. But we've only just come," she adds, with the woman's natural desire to explain to new-found friends why and how it was that they had not met before. And then the group is joined by a bulky young Briton in the garb of a groom, though modified to suit the requirements of frontier life: he comes cantering to the scene all elbows and consternation; he gives a groan of dismay at sight of the prostrate hunter, but rides directly to his mistress. She is paling again now, and in evident pain, and Perry's face is a study as he stands, his eyes riveted upon her; but she strives to smile and reassure him.

"You'll have to ride to Dunr—to the ranch, Griggs," she said; "and—there's no help for it—papa will have to be told. Let them send for me."

"Pardon me, Miss Maitland," interrupted Colonel Brainard. "You are almost under the walls of Fort Rossiter, and Dunraven is miles away. I have sent a swift horse for Dr. Quin and a spring ambulance. We cannot let you go home, now that you are so near us, until you have had rest and proper care."

"Indeed we cannot, Miss Maitland," chimed in both ladies at a breath. "You are to come right to my house until you are fit to travel."

"I'm not very fit just now, certainly," she answers, with a faint smile; "but I can surely wait here until they send: 'twill not be more than an hour at most."

"It will be two hours,—perhaps three,—Miss Maitland," pleaded Perry, bending eagerly forward. "Do listen to our ladies!"

And "our ladies" prevailed. While Griggs went sputtering off to Dunraven with the sorrowful news, the strong arms of Perry and Graham lifted and bore their English captive to the shade of a clump of cottonwoods. Mrs. Sprague and Mrs. Lawrence managed to make a little couch for her as a temporary resort. Mrs. Belknap rode up and was formally introduced, then galloped away to Rossiter to send blankets for the picnic-couch and see to the pillows of the ambulance. The colonel and Perry remained with the ladies and engrossed their atten-

tion while Graham went back and sent two pistol-bullets into the struggling hunter's brain, stilling his pain forever. Then came Dr. Quin galloping like the wind down the familiar trail, chiding "Gladys" as though his right to do so were a long-established thing, and thereby setting Perry's teeth on edge, and, long before the call for afternoon stables was sounding, the fair daughter of Dunraven Ranch was housed within the walls of Rossiter and the "ice was broken." Perry had had the joy of helping carry her into Mrs. Sprague's coolest and cosiest room. She had held forth her hand—such a long, white, beautiful hand—and let it rest in his while she said, "You know how impossible it is for me to tell you how I thank you, Mr. Perry," and he had simply bowed over it, longing to say what he thought, but powerless to think of anything else; and then he had gone to his own quarters and shut himself in. Mrs. Sprague—bless her!—had invited him to call after retreat, and he had totally forgotten the Lawrences' dinner when he said he would be only too glad to come.

At the sounding of stable-call his dinky servant banged at the door and roused him from his reverie. He rose mechanically and went out into the broad sunshine, glancing first along the row to see how things were looking at the Spragues', and wishing with all his heart that they were somewhere within reach of a conservatory, that he might send a heaping box of fresh and dewy roses to that sacred room where she lay. How many a time, he thought, had he strolled into some odorous shop in the cities where his "leaves" were spent, and carelessly ordered cut flowers by the cubic foot sent with his card to some one with whom he had danced the german the night before and never expected to see again! What *wouldn't* he give now for just a few of those wasted, faded, forgotten flowers! He could see that the window was raised in the room to which they had carried her, and a soft breeze was playing in the folds of the white curtain; but no one was visible. Dreamily, and with no thought or look for other beings in the little garrison, he strode across the parade. An ambulance, dusty and travel-stained, was in front of Belknap's, and a couple of trunks—unmistakably feminine property—were being unloaded. He could have seen it, had he glanced over his left shoulder, and drawn the inference that "Mrs. Page" had arrived; but his thoughts were engrossed in the other direction. Then Graham came bounding along to join him, and near the quarters stood Captain Stryker, waiting for him, and both of them were unwilling to talk of anything but his exploit of a few hours before: it was all over the garrison by this time, and so was the news that Dunraven's fair and hitherto unknown mistress was now the guest of Fort Rossiter. All his jollity and gladness seemed to have ebbed away. Perry almost wished she were back at Dunraven and that no one knew of her existence but himself and that he were kneeling beside her once again, aiding her in restoring her stricken father to consciousness. But then he thought of the sudden arrival that had so disconcerted him that night, and to-day again. What did it mean that Quin assumed such airs of authority? How *dare* he call her Gladys?

Stables that afternoon proved a sore trial to him. Graham had to leave and go to his own troop; Parke took his place, and was all

lively enthusiasm and congratulation, yet wondering at the mood in which he found his friend. Stryker, after shaking his hand and saying a few words of quiet commendation, noted the constraint upon his usually lively subaltern, and wisely drew his own conclusions. The captain had been engaged much of the morning on an investigation of the mysterious assault on Sergeant Gwynne, and the developments had been such as to surround the case with additional interest, even though nothing tangible in the way of evidence was educed. He had purposed having a talk with Perry while at stables, but, after one or two searching glances at his face, Stryker concluded it best to postpone his proposed conference, and so allowed Perry to go on about his usual duties; but he smiled in his quiet way when he noted the evident relief with which his subaltern heard the order "Lead in!" that announced that grooming was over. It was fifteen minutes more, however, before the evening duties were complete; and when at last the men went swinging homeward in their white canvas frocks and Perry could return to his quarters to dress for his eagerly-anticipated call, the first thing that met his eyes as he came in sight of officers' row was a huge, bulky, covered travelling-carriage in front of Sprague's. Two or three ladies were there at the gate. Mr. Ewen, the English manager, was just mounting his horse; Dr. Quin, too, was there and already in saddle; and before poor Perry could get half-way across the parade, and just as the trumpets were sounding mess-call for supper, the bulky vehicle started; the ladies waved their handkerchiefs and kissed their hands, and, escorted by Ewen and the doctor, saluted by Colonel Brainard and the adjutant with raised forage-caps, Gladys Maitland was driven slowly away,—and Mrs. Belknap stood there in the little group of ladies smiling sweetly upon him as he hastened towards them. For many a long day afterwards mess-call always made him think of Mrs. Belknap's smile, and Mrs. Belknap's smile of mess-call. He shuddered at sound of one or sight of the other.

It was Mrs. Sprague who stepped forward to greet him, her womanly heart filled with sympathy for the sentiment she suspected. She had to push by Mrs. Belknap to reach him; but, this time, no consideration of etiquette stood in the way.

"It couldn't be helped," she said, in low, hurried tone, her kind eyes searching his, so clouded in the bitterness of his disappointment. "It couldn't be helped. The news of her accident—or something—brought on a seizure of some kind. Mr. Maitland was taken very ill, and they sent for her. The manager came, and with him her old nurse, Mrs. Cowan, and Dr. Quin said she could be moved without trouble: so she had to go. I hated to have her, too, for I've hardly had a word with her: Mrs. Belknap has been there most of the afternoon, even when she had a guest of her own just arrived, too." And Mrs. Sprague could not but show her vexation at this retrospect.

Perry stood in silence, looking yearningly after the retreating vehicle. It would take him but a few minutes to hasten to stables and saddle Nolan; he could easily catch them before they had gone two miles; but there was parade, and he could not ask to be excused. Not until he suddenly looked around and saw that Mrs. Belknap's dark eyes

were fixed in close scrutiny upon his face did he realize how he was betraying himself. Then he rallied, but with evident effort.

The colonel was standing but a few paces away, chatting with Mrs. Lawrence and his faithful adjutant. Mrs. Sprague stepped quickly towards him and spoke a few words in a low tone, while Mrs. Belknap remained looking straight into Perry's eyes. Before the young fellow could gather himself, Colonel Brainard, as though in reply to a suggestion of Mrs. Sprague's, suddenly started, exclaiming, "Why, by all means!" and then called aloud,—

"Oh! Perry, why not gallop down and overtake the Dunraven carriage and say good-by? Here's my horse all saddled now right in the yard. Take him and go: I would."

There was something so hearty and genial and sympathetic in the colonel's manner that Perry's face flushed despite his effort at nonchalance. The thought of seeing her again and hearing her sweet voice was a powerful incentive. He longed to go. The colonel's invitation was equivalent to an excuse from parade. There was no reason why he should not go. He was on the very point of thankfully accepting the tempting offer, when Mrs. Belknap's words arrested him. Clear and cutting, but still so low that none but he could hear, she spoke:

"Take my word for it, you are not wanted,—nor any other man,—when Dr. Quin is with her."

Perry's hesitation vanished. "Thank you, colonel. I believe I don't care to go," he answered, and, raising his cap to the ladies, turned on his heel and hurried to his quarters. Mrs. Belknap stood watching him one moment, then calmly rejoined the party at the gate.

"Well," said she, with the languid drawl that her regimental associates had learned to know so well, "this has been a day of surprises, has it not? Only fancy our having a beautiful English heiress here within reach and never knowing it until to-day!"

"But you had a surprise of your own, had you not?" interposed Mrs. Sprague, who was still chafing over the fact that her lovely and dangerous neighbor should have so monopolized the guest she considered hers by prior right, and who meant to remind her thus publicly of the neglect of which she had been guilty.

"Mrs. Page, you mean?" responded Mrs. Belknap, with the same languid, imperturbable manner. "Yes,—poor Jennie! She is always utterly used up after one of those long ambulance-journeys, and can only take a cup of tea and go to bed in a darkened room. All she wants is to be let alone, she says, until she gets over it. I suppose she will sleep till tattoo and then be up for half the night. You'll all come in and see her, *won't* you? *Au revoir*."

And so, calmly and gracefully and victoriously, the dark-eyed dame withdrew, leaving her honest-hearted antagonist only the sense of exasperation and defeat.

It was full quarter of an hour after parade, and darkness was settling down on the garrison, when Captain Lawrence's orderly tapped at the door of Mr. Perry's quarters, and, being bidden "Come in," pushed on to the sitting-room, where he found that young officer

plunged deep in an easy-chair in front of the fireplace, his attitude one of profound dejection.

"Beg pardon, lieutenant," said the man, "but Mrs. Lawrence and the captain's waitin' dinner for you."

XV.

Two days passed without event of any kind. Socially speaking, the garrison was enlivened by the advent of Mrs. Page, and everybody flocked to the Belknaps' quarters in order to do her proper homage. When Perry called he asked Parke to go with him, and, when the latter seemed ready to leave, the former, disregarding a very palpable hint from the lady of the house, picked up his forage-cap and went likewise. For two days the one subject under constant discussion at the post was the event of Miss Maitland's sudden appearance, her perilous run, and her daring and skilful rescue. Everybody maintained that Perry ought to be a very proud and happy fellow to have been the hero of such an occasion; but it was very plain that Perry was neither proud nor anything like happy. No one had ever known him so silent and cast down. The talk with Lawrence had helped matters very little.

In brief, this was about all the captain could tell him, and it was all hearsay evidence at best. The officers of the Eleventh and their ladies had, with a few exceptions, taken a dislike to Dr. Quin before Belknap and Lawrence with their companies of infantry had been ordered to Fort Rossiter. The feeling was in full blast when they arrived, and during the six or eight months they served there together the infantry people heard only one side of the story,—that of the Eleventh,—for the doctor never condescended to discuss the matter. After he was forbidden to leave the post by his commanding officer, and after the announcement of the "blockade" of Dunraven, it was observed that signals were sometimes made from the ranch at night: a strong light thrown from a reflector was flashed three times and then withdrawn. Next it was noted, by an enterprising member of the guard, that these signals were answered by a light in the doctor's windows, then that he mounted his horse and rode away down the valley of the Monee. He was always back at sick-call; and, if any one told the commanding officer of his disobedience of orders, it was not done until so near the departure of the Eleventh that the doctor was not afterwards actually caught in the act. Things would undoubtedly have been brought to a crisis had the Eleventh been allowed to remain.

Now as to the story about Mrs. Quin and her going. It was observed during the winter that she was looking very badly, and the story went the rounds in the Eleventh that she was stung and suffering because of her husband's conduct. Unquestionably there was some fair enchantress at Dunraven who lured him from his own fireside. She had no intimates among the ladies. She was proud and silent. It did not seem to occur to them that she was resentful of their dislike of her husband. They were sure she was "pining" because of his neglect—or worse. When, therefore, without word of warning, she suddenly

took her departure in the spring, there was a gasp of gossip-loving cronies in the garrison: all doubts were at an end: she had left him and taken her children with her.

"The more I think of it," said Lawrence, "the more I believe the whole thing capable of explanation. The only thing that puzzles me now is that Quin hides anything from your colonel, who is one of the most courteous and considerate men I ever served with. Perhaps he *has* told him, by this time: we don't know. Perhaps he thought he might be of the same stamp as his predecessor, and was waiting to find out before he made his confidences. As to Mrs. Quin's going away when she did, it may have been simply that her health was suffering, she needed change, and went with his full advice and by his wish, and he simply feels too much contempt for garrison gossip to explain. Very probably he knows nothing of the stories and theories in circulation: I'm sure *I* did not until a very few weeks ago. You know, Perry, there are some men in garrison who hear and know everything, and others who never hear a word of scandal."

But Perry was low in his mind. He could not forget Quin's sudden appearance,—his calling *her* Gladys; and then he hated the thought that it was Quin who saw him having that confounded tender interview with Mrs. Belknap. Was there ever such a streak of ill luck as that? No doubt the fellow had told her all about it! Perry left Lawrence's that night very little comforted, and only one gleam of hope did he receive in the two days that followed. Mrs. Sprague joyfully beckoned to him on Wednesday afternoon to read him a little note that had just come from Miss Maitland. Her father had been very ill, she wrote; his condition was still critical; but she sent a world of thanks to her kind entertainers at Rossiter, and these words: "I was sorry not to be able to see Mr. Perry again. Do not let him think I have forgotten, or will be likely to forget, the service he—and Nolan—did me."

Of Dr. Quin he saw very little. With the full consent and knowledge of Colonel Brainard, the doctor was spending a good deal of time at Dunraven now, attending to Mr. Maitland. Indeed, there seemed to be an excellent understanding between the commandant and his medical officer, and it was known that they had had a long talk together. Upper circles in the garrison were still agitated with chat and conjecture about Gladys Maitland and her strange father; Perry was still tortured with questions about his one visit to Dunraven whenever he was so incautious as to appear in public; but all through "the quarters," everywhere among the rank and file, there was a subject that engrossed all thoughts and tongues, and that was discussed with feeling that seemed to deepen with every day,—the approaching court-martial of Sergeant Leary and of Trooper Kelly.

As a result of his investigation, Captain Stryker had preferred charges against these two men,—the one for leading and the other for being accessory to the assault on his stable-sergeant. Gwynne was still at the hospital, though rapidly recovering from his injuries. Not a word had he said that would implicate or accuse any man; but Stryker's knowledge of his soldiers, and his clear insight into human motive and

character, were such that he had readily made up his mind as to the facts in the case. He felt sure that Leary and some of the Celtic members of his company had determined to go down to Dunraven and "have it out" with the hated Britons who had so affronted and abused them the night of Perry's visit. They knew they could not get their horses by fair means, for Gwynne was above suspicion. He was English, too, and striving to shield his countrymen from the threatened vengeance. They therefore determined, in collusion with Kelly, to lure him outside the stables, bind and gag him, get their horses, having once rifled Gwynne of the keys, ride down to the ranch, and, after having a Donnybrook Fair on the premises, get back to Rossiter in plenty of time for reveille and stables. No sentries were posted in such a way as to interfere with them, and the plan was feasible enough but for one thing. Gwynne had made most gallant and spirited resistance, had fought the whole gang like a tiger, and they had been unable to overpower him before the noise had attracted the attention of the sergeant of the guard and some of the men in quarters. An effort, of course, was made to show that the assaulting party were from without, but it was futile, and Stryker's keen cross-questioning among the men had convinced them that he knew all about the matter. There was only one conclusion, therefore,—that Gwynne must have "given them away," as the troopers expressed it. Despite the fact that he had been assaulted and badly beaten, this was something that few could overlook, and the latent jealousy against the "cockney sergeant" blazed into a feeling of deep resentment. Garrison sympathy was with Leary and his fellows: they had simply done their best to wipe out a brutal insult to their officer and their regiment, and they would have succeeded, too, but for the interference and stubborn resistance of this bumptious Englishman. It arrayed all the rank and file of the —th for the defence, and there was every prospect that when the court convened—and they well knew it would be ordered—there would be some "tall swearing."

Thursday came, and Sergeant Gwynne returned to light duty, though his face was still bruised and discolored and he wore a patch over one eye. He resumed charge of the stables in the afternoon, after a brief conversation with his captain, and was superintending the issue of forage, when Perry entered to inspect the stalls of his platoon. Nolan was being led out by his groom at the moment, and pricked up his tapering ears at sight of his master and thrust his lean muzzle to receive the caress of the hand he knew so well. Perry stopped him and carefully and critically examined his knees, feeling down to the fetlocks with searching fingers for the faintest symptom of knot or swelling in the tendons that had played their part so thoroughly in the drama of Monday. Satisfied, apparently, he rose and bestowed a few hearty pats on the glossy neck and shoulder, and then was surprised to find the stable-sergeant standing close beside him and regarding both him and the horse with an expression that arrested Perry's attention at once.

"Feeling all right again, sergeant?" he asked, thinking to recall the non-commissioned officer to his senses.

"Almost, sir. I'm a trifle stiff yet. Anything wrong with Nolan, sir?"

"Nothing. I gave him rather a tough run the other day,—had to risk the prairie-dog holes,—and, though I felt no jar then, I've watched carefully ever since to see that he was not wrenched. I wish you would keep an eye on him too, will you?"

There was no answer. Perry had been looking over Nolan's haunches as he spoke, and once more turned to the sergeant. To his astonishment, Gwynne's lips were twitching and quivering, his hands, ordinarily held in the rigid pose of the English service,—extended along the thigh,—were clenching and working nervously, and something suspiciously like a tear was creeping out from under the patch. Before Perry could recover from his surprise, the sergeant suddenly regained his self-control, hastily raised his hand in salute, saying something half articulate in reply, and turned sharply away, leaving his lieutenant gazing after him in much perplexity.

That night, just after tattoo roll-call, when a little group of officers was gathered at the colonel's gate, they were suddenly joined by Dr. Quin, who came from the direction of the stable where he kept his horse in rear of his own quarters. Colonel Brainard greeted him warmly and inquired after his patient at Dunraven. Every one noted how grave and subdued was the tone in which the doctor answered,—

"He is a very sick man, colonel, and it is hard to say what will be the result of this seizure."

"You may want to go down again, doctor, if that be the case,—before sick-call to-morrow, I mean; and you had better take one of my horses. I'll tell my man to have one in readiness."

"You are very kind, sir. I think old Brian will do all the work needed. But I would like to go down at reveille, as we have no men in hospital at all now. And, by the way, is Mr. Perry here?"

"I am here," answered Perry, coldly. He was leaning against the railing, rather away from the group, listening intently, yet unwilling to meet or hold conversation with the man he conceived to be so inimical to his every hope and interest.

"Mr. Perry," said the doctor, pleasantly, and utterly ignoring the coldness of the young fellow's manner, "Mr. Maitland has asked to see you; and it would gratify him if you would ride down in the morning."

Even in the darkness Perry feared that all would see the flush that leaped to his face. Summoned to Dunraven Ranch, by her father, with a possibility of seeing *her*! It was almost too sweet! too thrilling! He could give no reply for a moment, and an awkward silence fell on the group until he chokingly answered, "I shall be glad to go. What time?"

"Better ride down early. Never mind breakfast. Miss Maitland will be glad to give you a cup of coffee, I fancy."

And Perry felt as though the fence had taken to waltzing. He made no answer, striving to regain his composure, and then the talk went on. It was Stryker who was speaking now:

"Has the ring been found, doctor?"

"No! That is a most singular thing, and one that worries the old

gentleman a great deal. It had a history: it belonged to Mrs. Maitland's father, who was from Ireland,—indeed, Ireland was her country, as it was my father's,—and that ring she had reset for her son Archie and gave it to him when he entered service with the Lancers. It was sent home with his watch and other property from South Africa,—for he died there,—and old Maitland always wore it afterwards. Archie was the last of three sons; and it broke his heart."

"And the ring was lost the night of Perry's adventure there?" asked the colonel.

"Yes. Mr. Perry remembers having seen it on his hand when the old gentleman first came down to receive him. It was missed afterwards, and could easily have slipped off at any time, for his fingers were withered with age and ill health. They have searched everywhere; and could find nothing of it. It could easily have rolled off the veranda on to the grass during his excitement at the time of the row, and somebody may have picked it up,—either among the ranchmen or among the troopers."

"I hate to think that any of our men would take it," said the colonel, after a pause.

"I do not think any of them would, with the idea of selling it," said Stryker; "but here is a case where it was picked up, possibly, as one of the spoils of war. I have had inquiry made throughout the troop, but with no result so far. Do you go down again to-night, doctor?"

"Not if I can avoid it. I am going now to try and sleep, and will not ride down till daybreak unless signalled for. Good-night, colonel; good-night, all."

Unless signalled for! Instinctively Perry edged closer to Lawrence, who had stood a silent listener to the conversation, and Lawrence turned and saw him and knew the thought that must be uppermost in his mind. Others, too, were doubtless struck by the doctor's closing words, and were pondering over their full significance. There was a moment of perfect silence, and then Lawrence spoke:

"Does anybody know what the signal is?"

"Certainly," said Colonel Brainard, promptly. "He has explained the whole thing to me. Those were signals for him that we saw the night you were all on my gallery. It was an arrangement devised by their old nurse,—she who came up with the carriage for Miss Maitland the other day. She had a regular old-fashioned head-light and reflector, and, when Mr. Maitland was so ill as to need a doctor, used to notify Quin in that way. He sometimes failed to see it, and I have given orders to-day that the guard should wake him when it is seen hereafter."

"Then *that* was what those mysterious night lights meant that we have heard so much about during the last three weeks?" asked Mr. Dana.

"Certainly," answered Brainard. "What on earth did anybody suppose they meant?"

To this there was no response for a moment. Then Lawrence burst out laughing.

XVI.

Late that night Mr. Perry left his quarters and strolled out on the walk that bounded the parade. He could not sleep; he was feverishly impatient for the coming of another day, that he might start forth on his ride to Dunraven. Few as were the words in which Dr. Quin had conveyed the message of invitation, they were sufficient to set his heart athrob and his pulses bounding with eagerness and delight. Then, too, the annihilation of one portion, at least, of the "mystery" that surrounded the doctor's night visits to Dunraven, the utterly matter-of-fact way in which the colonel had shattered that story by his announcement, and the kind and friendly tone in which the doctor had spoken to him, all had served to bring about a revulsion of feeling and to remove a great portion of the weight of suspicion and dread with which he had been burdened. He and Lawrence had walked home together, the captain ever and anon bursting into renewed peals of laughter over the utterly absurd *dénouement* so recently presented to their view. The colonel and the officers with him had, of course, asked the cause of his sudden and apparently unaccountable merriment, and, when he could sufficiently control himself, Lawrence had begged the indulgence of his post commander, saying it involved a long story,—a garrison yarn, in fact,—and one he could hardly retail just then; but, said he, "it reminds me of something we studied in our school-boy days,—'*parturiunt montes*,' and '*nascitur ridiculus mus*.' Of course I'll feel bound to tell you the facts, colonel, but I want to ask a question or two first. The story is a relic of your predecessor's, sir, and, if I haven't got a big joke on the Eleventh, may I be transferred to them forthwith." And the captain's laughter broke forth again.

But he was in more serious mood when he reached his gate and turned to say good-night to Perry:

"It all goes to show what infernal gossip can spring up out of next to nothing, Perry, and I hope you'll try and forget that Mrs. Lawrence's curiosity or womanly weakness got the better of her that night at the colonel's. It will be a lesson to her,—if people ever do profit by lessons in such matters," he added, with rather a rueful smile.

And then, though he had gone home with lighter heart and ashamed of his jealous suspicions, Perry could not sleep. There were still some things in Quin's relations with the Maitlands that required explanation and that gave him cause for painful reflection. The morrow might unravel it all and give him glad relief from every dread; but would the morrow never come?

He heard the sentries at the storehouses calling half-past eleven, and, throwing aside his pipe, he impulsively hurried out into the open air. A "spin" around the parade or out on the starlit prairie might soothe his nerves and enable him to sleep.

All lights were out in the quadrangle, save those at the guard-house. Even at Belknap's quarters, where the veranda had been thronged with officers and ladies only an hour before, all was now silence and darkness. Unwilling to attract attention by tramping up and down on the board walk, he crossed the road and went out on the broad level of the

parade, but took care so to direct his steps as not to come within hailing-distance of the guard-house. It would be awkward work explaining the situation to the sergeant of the guard in case the sentry were to see or hear and challenge him. Then, too, Graham was officer of the guard, and Graham would be sure to chaff him mercilessly at the mess-table about this entirely new trait of night-prowling. Giving heed to all this, he edged well over to his left as he walked, and so it happened that he found himself, after a while, opposite the northeast entrance to the post, and close to the road on which stood the commissary and quartermaster storehouses. There was a sentry posted here, too, and it would not do to be challenged by him, any more than by "Number One."

Stopping a moment to listen for the sentry's foot-fall, Perry's ear was attracted by the sound of a door slowly and cautiously opened. It was some little time before he could tell from which one of the neighboring buildings, looming there in the darkness, the sound proceeded. Then he heard muffled footsteps and a whispered consultation not far away, and, hurrying on tiptoe in the direction of the sound, he presently caught sight of two or three dim, shadowy forms moving noiselessly along the porch of the company quarters nearest him. Stryker's troop—that to which he belonged—was quartered down beyond the guard-house on the lower side of the parade; these forms were issuing from the barracks of Captain Wayne's troop, and before Perry could realize the fact that they were out, either in moccasins or their stocking-feet, and presumably, therefore, on some unlawful enterprise, they had disappeared around the corner of the building. He walked rapidly thither, turned the corner, and they were nowhere in sight or hearing. Stopping to listen did not help matters at all. He could not hear a sound; and as for the shadows of which he was in pursuit, it was simply impossible to tell which direction they had taken. They had vanished from the face of the earth, and were lost in the deeper gloom that hung about the scattered array of wooden buildings—storehouses, fuel-sheds, and cook-sheds—at the rear of the post.

Had it been his own troop he could have roused the first sergeant and ordered a "check" roll-call as a means of determining at once who the night-prowlers might be; but Captain Wayne had his peculiarities, and one of them was an unalterable and deeply-rooted objection to any interference on the part of other officers in the management of his men. Perry's first thought, too, was of the stables and Sergeant Gwynne. Were they meditating another foray, and had the feeling spread outside their own company? No time was to be lost. He turned his face eastward to where the dark outlines of the stables could be dimly traced against the sky, and hastened, stumbling at times over stray tin cans and other discarded rubbish, until he crossed the intervening swale and reached the low bluff along which the crude, unpainted structures were ranged. All was darkness here towards the northern end, and the one sentry who had external charge of the entire line was slowly pacing his post: Perry could see his form, dimly outlined, as he breasted the slope, and it determined him to keep on in the hollow until he got to a point opposite the stables of his own troop. If there was to be any devil-

ment it might be well to see whether this soldier, too, would turn out to be in league with the conspirators. Listening intently as he hurried along, but hearing nothing, Perry soon found himself at the pathway leading to his own domain, and the next minute was gazing in surprise at a light burning dimly in the window of the little room occupied by Sergeant Gwynne: there was not a glimmer elsewhere along the line.

Striding up to the window, he tapped lightly, and Gwynne's voice sternly challenged from within, "Who's there?"

"Lieutenant Perry, sergeant. Come around and open the stable door for me."

"One moment, sir," was the answer, and he heard the sergeant bounding, apparently, off his bed. Then a hand drew aside the shade, and Gwynne's face appeared at the window, while a small lantern was held so as to throw its rays on the face without. "All right, sir," he continued. "I thought I could not be deceived in the voice."

Perry walked around to the front again, taking another survey of the sleeping garrison as he did so, and listening once more for footsteps; but all was still. Presently the little panel in the big door was unlocked from within, and the lieutenant bent low and entered, finding Gwynne, lantern in hand, standing in his uncompromising attitude of "attention" at the entrance.

"Everything been quiet here to-night?" he asked, as he straightened up.

"Perfectly so, sir."

"Come into your room a moment; I want to speak to you," said Perry, after a moment's reflection.

They passed along the broad gangway between the rows of sleepy horses, some lying down in their stalls, others still afoot and munching at their hay. The stable-guard stood at his post and faced them as they turned into the dark and narrow passage leading into Gwynne's little sanctuary. The lamps along the line of stalls burned low and dim, and, the ports being lowered, gave no gleam without the walls. Once more, however, a bright light shone from the window of the stable-sergeant's room,—brighter than before, could they only know it, for this time there was no intervening shade. After his brief inspection of the lieutenant's face, Gwynne had left it drawn.

The sergeant set his lantern on a wooden desk, and respectfully waited for his superior to speak. Perry looked him well over a moment, and then began:

"Did you tell Captain Stryker the particulars of your rough treatment down there at the ranch?"

"The rough treatment,—yes, sir."

"Would you mind telling me where you were taken?—where you saw Dr. Quin?"

The sergeant hesitated one moment, a troubled look on his face. His one available eye studied his lieutenant's features attentively. Something in the frank, kind blue eyes—possibly some sudden recollection, too—seemed to reassure him.

"It was to Mr. Cowan's little house, sir. He interposed to save me from a worse beating at the hands of three brutes who were em-

ployed there and had some grudge against this garrison of which I was ignorant. They attacked me without a word of warning. It was he, too, who called in Dr. Quin."

"Have you—did you see any of the people at Dunraven besides this young man?"

"I saw his mother, sir. She is a nurse there, and has been in the family for years, I am told."

Perry was silent a moment. Then he spoke again:

"Have you heard any further threats among the men here since the arrest of Sergeant Leary?"

Gwynne hesitated, coloring painfully:

"It is something I hate to speak of, sir. The talk has not alarmed me in the least."

"I know that, sergeant. All the same we want to prevent a recurrence of that performance; and it was that, mainly, that brought me over here. I saw some men stealing out of M Troop's quarters awhile ago, and lost them in the darkness. I thought they might be coming over here, and—got here first."

Gwynne's face lighted up. It touched him to know his officers were on the lookout for his safety.

"I have heard nothing, sir. The men would hardly be apt to speak to me on the subject, since the affair of the other night. What I fear is simply this,—that there is an element here in the regiment that is determined to get down there to the ranch and have satisfaction for the assault that was made on you and your party. They need horses in order to get there and back between midnight and reveille, and are doubtless hatching some plan. They failed here; now they may try the stables of some other troop, or the quartermaster's. Shall I warn the sentry that there are prowlers out to-night?"

"Not yet. They will hardly make the attempt while your light is burning here. What I'm concerned about just now is this: we all know that there is deep sympathy for Leary in the command, and it is not improbable that among the Irishmen there is corresponding feeling against you. I don't like your being here alone just now; for they know you are almost the only witness against him."

"I have thought of that, sir," answered Gwynne, gravely, "but I want nothing that looks like protection. The captain has spoken of the matter to me, and he agreed, sir, that it would do more harm than good. There is one thing I would ask,—if I may trouble the lieutenant."

"What is it, sergeant?"

"I have a little packet, containing some papers and a trinket or two, that I would like very much to have kept safely, and, if anything should happen to me, to have you, sir, and Captain Stryker open it, and—the letters there will explain everything that is to be done."

"Certainly. I will take care of it for you,—if not too valuable."

"I would rather know it was with you, sir, than stow it in the quartermaster's safe," was Gwynne's answer, as he opened a little wooden chest at the foot of his bunk, and, after rummaging a moment, drew forth a parcel tied and sealed. This he handed to the lieutenant.

"Now I will go back and notify the officer of the guard of what I have seen," said Perry; "and I want Nolan, saddled, over at my quarters right after morning stables. Will you see to it?"

"I will, sir, and thank you for your kindness."

All was darkness, all silence and peace, as Perry retraced his steps and went back to the garrison, carrying the little packet in his hand. He went direct to the guard-house, and found Mr. Graham sulky over being disturbed in his snooze by the sentry's challenge.

"What the devil are you owling around this time of night for?" was the not unnatural question. "I thought it was the officer of the day, and nearly broke my neck in hurrying out here."

But Perry's brief recital of the fact that he had seen some men stealing out of the quarters of M Troop in their stocking-feet or moccasins put an end to Graham's complaints. Hastily summoning the sergeant of the guard, he started out to make the rounds of his sentries, while Perry carried his packet home, locked it in his desk, and then returned to the veranda to await developments.

Sergeant Gwynne, meantime, having lighted his young officer to the stable door, stood there a few moments, looking over the silent garrison and listening to the retreating footsteps. The sentry came pacing along the front of the stables, and brought his carbine down from the shoulder as he dimly sighted the tall figure, but, recognizing the stable-sergeant as he came nearer, the ready challenge died on his lips.

"I *thought* I heard somebody moving around down here, sergeant. It was you, then, was it?"

"I have been moving around,—inside,—but made no noise. Have you heard footsteps or voices?"

"Both, I thought; but it's as black as your hat on this beat to-night. I can't see my hand afore my face."

"Keep your ears open, then: there are men out from *one* of the quarters, at least, and no telling what they are up to. Who's in charge at the quartermaster's stables?"

"Sergeant Riley, of the infantry; some of the fellers were over having a little game with him before tattoo, and I heard him tell 'em to come again when they had more money to lose. He and his helper there were laughing at the way they cleaned out the cavalry when they were locking up at taps. The boys fetched over a bottle of whiskey with 'em."

"Who were they?"

"Oh, there was Flanagan and Murphy, of M Troop, and Corporal Donovan, and one or two others. *They* hadn't been drinkin'."

"But Riley had,—do you mean?"

"He was a little full; not much."

"Well, look alive now, Wicks. It's my advice to you that you watch that end of your post with all your eyes." And with this Sergeant Gwynne turned back into the stable, picked up his lantern, and returned to the little room in which he slept. A current of cool night-air, blowing in through the open casement, attracted his attention. Odd! He knew he had pulled aside the shade to scan the features of

the lieutenant when he tapped at the pane, but he could not recall having opened the sash. It swung on a hinge, and was fastened by a loosely-fitting bolt. Perhaps the rising wind had blown it in. He set his lamp down as before, closed the sash, and then closed and locked the lid of his chest. That, too, was open. Wicks, the sentry, well up to the north end of his post and close to the entrance of the quarter-master's corral, was bawling, "Half-past twelve o'clock, and a-all's well," when the light went out in Gwynne's little room, and all the line of stables was wrapped in darkness.

Perry fretted around the veranda until one o'clock, then sought his room. He was still too excited to sleep, and it seemed an interminable time before he dozed off. Then it seemed as though he could not have been in dream-land five minutes before a hand was laid upon his shoulder, shaking him vigorously, and a voice he well knew was exclaiming, in low but forcible tones,—

"Wake, lieutenant, wake! Every horse is gone from the quarter-master's corral. There must be twenty men gone down the valley. I've Nolan here for you at the gate."

In ten minutes Lieutenant Perry and Sergeant Gwynne were riding neck and neck out over the eastern prairie,—out towards the paling orient stars and the faintly-gleaming sky,—before them, several miles away, the dark and threatened walls of Dunraven, behind them the stir and excitement and bustle consequent upon a night alarm. The colonel, roused by Perry with the news, had ordered the instant sounding of the assembly, and the garrison was tumbling out for roll-call.

XVII.

At the head of a score of his own men, Captain Stryker rode forth some fifteen minutes later. His orders from Colonel Brainard were to go to Dunraven, and, if he found the marauders there, to arrest the entire party and bring them back to the post. From all that could be learned from hurried questioning of the sentries and the dazed, half-drunken sergeant at the corral, the troopers engaged in the raid must have selected a time when the sentry was walking towards the south end of his post to lift one of their number over the wall of the enclosure in which were kept the wagons and ambulances. This man had unbarred from within the gate leading eastward to the trail down which the "stock" was driven daily to water in the Monee. Riley admitted that "the boys" had left a bottle with him which he and his assistant had emptied before turning in, and so it happened that, unheard and unseen, the raiders had managed to slip out with the dozen horses that were kept there and had also taken six mules as "mounts" for those who could not find anything better. Eighteen men, apparently, were in the party, and the sentry on Number Three heard hoof-beats down towards the valley about half-past two o'clock, but thought it was only some of the ponies belonging to the Cheyenne scouts. There was one comfort,—the men had taken no fire-arms with them; for a hurried inspection of the company quarters showed that the carbines were all in their racks and the revolvers in their cases. Some of the men might

have small-calibre pistols of their own, but the government arms had not been disturbed. Half the party, at least, must have ridden bare-back and with only watering-bridles for their steeds. They were indeed "spoiling for a fight," and the result of the roll-call showed that the missing troopers were all Irishmen and some of the best and most popular men in the command. Whatever their plan, thought Stryker, as he trotted down to the Monee, it was probably carried out by this time: it was now within a minute of four o'clock.

Only a mile out he was overtaken by Dr. Quin, who reined up an instant to ask if any one had been sent ahead. "Thank God for that!" he exclaimed, when told that Perry and Sergeant Gwynne had gone at the first alarm; then, striking spurs to his horse, pushed on at rapid gallop, while the troopers maintained their steady trot. A mile from Dunraven, in the dim light of early morning the captain's keen eyes caught sight of shadowy forms of mounted men on the opposite shore, and, despite their efforts to escape on their wearied steeds, three of them were speedily run down and captured. One of them was Corporal Donovan, and Donovan's face was white and his manner agitated. Bidding him ride alongside as they pushed ahead towards the ranch, Stryker questioned him as to what had taken place, and the corporal never sought to equivocate:

"We've been trying for several nights, sir, to get horses and go down and have it out with those blackguards at the ranch. We took no arms, sir, even those of us who had pistols of our own. All we asked was a fair fight, man against man. They wouldn't come out of their hole,—they *dasn't* do it, sir,—and then they fired on us. We'd have burned the roof over their heads, but that Lieutenant Perry galloped in and stopped us. I came away then, sir, and so did most of us. We knew 'twas all up when we saw the lieutenant; but there was more firing after I left. This way, captain. Out across the prairie here. We cut down the fence on this side." And, so saying, Donovan led the little troop to a broad gap in the wire barrier, and thence straight across the fields to where lights were seen flitting about in the dark shadows of the buildings of the ranch. Another moment, and Stryker had dismounted and was kneeling beside the prostrate and unconscious form of his lieutenant. Some misguided ranchman, mistaking for a new assailant the tall young soldier who galloped into the midst of the swarm of taunting Irishmen, had fired the cruel shot. There lay Nolan dead upon the sward, and here, close at hand, his grief-stricken master had finally swooned from loss of blood, the bullet having pierced his leg below the knee. Beside him knelt the doctor: he had cut away the natty riding-boot, and was rapidly binding up the wound. Close at hand stood Gwynne, a world of anxiety and trouble in his bruised and still discolored face. Grouped around were some of the assailing party, crestfallen and dismayed at the unlooked-for result of their foray, but ashamed to attempt to ride away, now that their favorite young officer was sore stricken as a result of their mad folly. Mr. Ewen, too, had come out, and was bustling about, giving directions to the one or two of his hands who had ventured forth from the office building. The big frame house under whose walls the group was

gathered was evidently used as a dormitory for a number of men, and this had been the objective point of the attack, but not a soul had issued from its portals: the occupants were the men who made the assault on Perry the night of his first visit, and now they deemed it best to keep within. Everything indicated that Perry had got to the scene just in time to prevent a bloody and desperate fracas, for the few ranch-people who appeared were still quivering with excitement and dread. Ewen was almost too much agitated to speak:

"Go to Mr. Maitland as soon as you can, doctor: this has given him a fearful shaking up. Mrs. Cowan is having a room made ready for Mr. Perry. Ah! here's young Cowan now.—Ready?" he asked.

"All ready. Mother says carry the gentleman right in.—She wants you to come too," he added, in lower tone, to Sergeant Gwynne, but the latter made no reply.

And so, borne in the arms of several of his men, Lieutenant Perry was carried across the intervening space and into the main building. When he recovered consciousness, as the morning light came through the eastern windows, he found himself lying in a white-curtained bed in a strange room, with a strange yet kind and motherly face bending over him, and his captain smiling down into his wondering eyes.

"You are coming round all right, old fellow," he heard Stryker say. "I'll call the doctor now: he wanted to see you as soon as you waked."

And then Quin came in and said a few cheery words and bade him lie still and worry about nothing. The row was over, thanks to him, and he and poor Nolan were the only victims; but it had been a great shock to Mr. Maitland and rendered his condition critical.

Perry listened in silence, asking no questions. For the time being he could think of nothing but Nolan's loss. It was such a cruel fate to be killed by those he came to save.

All that day he lay there, dozing and thinking alternately. He wondered at the tenderness and devotion with which the kind old Englishwoman nursed him and seemed to anticipate his every want. Quin came in towards evening and dressed his wound, which now began to be feverish and painful. He heard his colonel's voice in the hallway, too, and heard him say to the doctor that somebody at Rossiter was eager to come down and take care of him. "Bosh!" said the blunt surgeon; "I've a far better nurse here,—and a reserve to fall back upon that will be worth a new life to him." And, weak and feverish though he was, Perry's heart thrilled within him: he wondered if it *could* mean Gladys. Two days more he lay there, the fever skilfully controlled by the doctor's ministrations, and the pain of his wound subdued by Mrs. Cowan's cooling bandages and applications. But there was a burning fever in his heart that utterly refused to down. He strained his ears listening for the sound of her voice or the pit-a-pat of her foot-fall in the corridor. At last he mustered courage and asked for her, and Mrs. Cowan smiled:

"Miss Maitland has been here three times to inquire how you were; but it was while you were sleeping, Mr. Perry, and she rarely leaves her father's bedside. He is very ill, and seems to be growing

weaker every day. I don't know what we would have done if we had not found Dr. Quin here: he has pulled him through two or three bad seizures during the past year."

"Where had you known the doctor before?" asked Perry, with an eager light in his eyes.

"Nowhere; but it was as though one of his own kith and kin had suddenly appeared here to welcome Mr. Maitland. The doctor is a first-cousin of Mrs. Maitland's: she was from Ireland, and it was from her family that the ranch was named. Lord Dunraven is of the peerage of Ireland, you know," added Mrs. Cowan, with the cheerful confidence of the Englishwoman that every person of any education or standing must be familiar with the pages of Debrett.

"How should I know anything about it?" laughed Perry. He felt in merry mood; another page in his volume of suspicion and dread was being torn away, and Quin's relations with the household were turning out to be such as made him an object of lively interest, not of jealous doubt.

Then came callers from the garrison. It seemed as though all of a sudden the blockade had been raised and that no people were so warmly welcomed at Dunraven as the very ones who had been especially proscribed. Mr. Maitland, weak and ill as he was, had asked to be allowed to see Colonel Brainard on the occasion of that officer's second visit; Stryker, Dana, Graham, and Parke had all been allowed to come up and see Perry a few moments, but Mrs. Cowan was vigilant and remorseless, would allow them only a brief interview, and, with smiling determination, checked her patient when he attempted to talk. The third day of his imprisonment Dr. Quin came scowling in along in the afternoon, manifestly annoyed about something, and said a few words in a low tone to Mrs. Cowan, and that usually equable matron fluttered away down-stairs in evident excitement.

"It's Mrs. Belknap," explained the doctor, in answer to Perry's inquiring look. "She has ridden down here with Dana and sent her card up to Gladys,—who can't bear the sight of her; I don't know why; intuition, I suppose."

Presently Mrs. Cowan reappeared: "Miss Gladys has asked to be excused, as she does not wish to leave her father at this moment; and the lady would like to come up and see Mr. Perry."

"Tell her *no*!" said Quin, savagely. "No,—here: I'll go myself." And down went the doughty medical officer, and straightway the rumbling tones of his harsh voice were heard below: the words were indistinguishable, but Mrs. Cowan's face indicated that there was something in the sound that gave her comfort. She stood at the window watching the pair as they rode away.

"Miss Gladys shuddered when she had to shake hands with her that day when we came away from Mrs. Sprague's," said she. "I hope that lady is not a particular friend of yours, Mr. Perry?"

"We have been very good friends indeed," said he, loyally. "To be sure, I have hardly known Mrs. Belknap a month, but both she and the captain have been very kind to me." All the same, down in the bottom of his heart he did not wonder at Miss Maitland's sensa-

tions. He was beginning to despair of ever seeing her, and yet could get no explanation that satisfied him.

"You know she can walk only with great pain and difficulty even now," said Mrs. Cowan. "Her ankle was very badly wrenched, and she hardly goes farther than from her own to her father's room. You ought to feel complimented that she has been here to your door three times."

"I feel more like butting my brains out for being asleep," muttered Perry in reply. "I wish you would wake me next time, Mrs. Cowan. I shan't believe it until I see it, or hear her voice at the door."

She had excused herself to Mrs. Belknap, and the doctor had denied that lovely woman her request to be allowed to come up and see Mr. Perry; and yet, the very next day, when the big four-mule ambulance from Rossiter came driving up to the front door, and Mrs. Sprague and Mrs. Lawrence, escorted by the colonel and Captain Stryker, appeared on the veranda, how did it happen that the ladies were speedily ushered up-stairs to Miss Maitland's own room, and that, after an animated though low-toned chat of half an hour with her, they were marshalled down the long corridor by Mrs. Cowan in person, and, to Perry's huge delight, were shown in to his bedside? It looked as though Quin were showing unwarrantable discrimination. Stryker and the colonel, too, came in to see him, and the latter told him that both Mr. Maitland and Mr. Ewen had begged that the arrested soldiers might not be punished. Including Sergeant Léary and Kelly, there were now twenty men under charges more or less grave in their character, and he had asked that a general court-martial be convened for their trial. The colonel deeply appreciated the feeling displayed by the stricken proprietor and his overseer; he was touched that even in his extreme illness and prostration Mr. Maitland should intercede for the men who had made so hostile an invasion of his premises and brought upon the inmates of Dunraven a night of dread and anxiety; but discipline had to be maintained, he replied, and the ringleaders in the move had been guilty of a flagrant breach which could not be overlooked.

But on the following day—the fourth of Perry's stay—the doctor came down with a face full of gloom and distress. Both nurse and patient noted it, and inquired the cause. For a time Quin avoided any direct reply: "something had ruffled him up at the post," he answered: "can't tell you about it now. I'll do it by and by. I want to think." He examined Perry's leg, dressed and rebanded the wound, and then went back to Mr. Maitland's room. They could hear his voice in the hall after a while, and Perry's heart began to throb heavily: he was sure the low, sweet tones, almost inaudible, that came floating along the corridor, were those of Gladys. When Mrs. Cowan spoke to him on some ordinary topic, he impatiently bade her hush,—he could not bear to be disturbed,—and, far from being hurt at his petulance, Mrs. Cowan smiled softly as she turned away.

Then Quin came back, and, after fidgeting around a moment, abruptly addressed his patient:

"Perry, do you remember that morning you rode down here right after reveille and met me on the trail,—or at least would have met me if I hadn't dodged and gone over to the other side of the valley?"

"Certainly I do, doctor."

"I may as well explain that singular performance first. You may have heard that I didn't get along amicably with your predecessors of the Eleventh. Their colonel was ass enough to totally misconstrue the purpose of my visits here, and I was ass enough to make no explanation. The Maitlands went away; I was not called for again while the Eleventh remained; and therefore I said no more about it. Mr. Maitland returned unexpectedly soon after you came, and the first I knew of it was the signal-lights telling me he was there, ill, and that I was wanted. It was the night of the colonel's dinner-party. I couldn't explain then, and decided to go at once and explain afterwards. When I met you all of a sudden the next morning, the first impulse was to get away out of your sight, and I obeyed it simply because of the unpleasant experiences I had been having with your fellow-cavalrymen. I did not want to have to answer questions. See? I was ashamed of it, but too late to turn back."

Perry nodded. "I understand it—now," he said.

"Well, what I want to ask is about Sergeant Gwynne. Did you meet him before you got back?"

"Yes,—a mile or so out from the post."

"You stopped and talked with him, didn't you?"

"Yes,—for several minutes."

Mrs. Cowan's needle-work had fallen in her lap. She was seated near the window, and had been busily sewing. Now she was looking up, eager and intent.

"You've known him a long time, haven't you?"

"Yes,—ever since he joined. He's one of the best sergeants I ever knew."

"You would hardly think him guilty of any dishonesty, would you?"

Mrs. Cowan was rising from her chair; the needle-work had fallen to the floor.

"Dishonesty! Not by a—good deal!" was the reply that bade fair to be even more impulsive, and was checked only in deference to the presence of a woman.

"Well, neither would I, from what I've seen of him; and yet Mr. Maitland's seal ring was found on him last night."

"My God! Of course he could explain it in some way?"

"He couldn't,—or wouldn't. He simply stood there, white as a sheet except where those bruises made him green and blue. He had denied the charge flatly when accused; and yet there it was in his chest. I never saw any man so taken aback as Captain Stryker: he said he would have sworn to his innocence."

"So would I!—so I do, by Jupiter! It's some foul plot!—it's—"

But he got no further. To his own amaze, to the utter bewilderment of Dr. Quin, Mrs. Cowan precipitated herself upon her patient, seized the hand that lay nearest her on the coverlet, and burst forth into half-articulate, sobbing, indignant words, mingled with kisses showered passionately on that astonished hand.

"Oh, bless him for the words! Oh, God bless you, Mr. Perry! . . . Oh, the fools! the lunatics! . . . A thief, indeed! . . . The idea of his being accused! . . . Oh, God! what would his mother in heaven say to this? . . . As though he had not borne far too much already! . . . It's his own—his own ring, I tell you! Who else should wear it? . . . Who dare take it from him now? . . . Oh, the infamy of it all!"

In her wild excitement, in her incoherent praise and lamentation and wrath and indignation, her voice, her sobs, rang through the room and out along the broad corridor. Even in their amaze the two men heard a hurried step approaching, a limping, halting, painful step, yet rapid and impulsive. Quin, absorbed in his contemplation of the excited woman, paid no attention; Perry's eager eyes were strained upon the door-way, where, the very next instant, with pallid features and startled mien, Gladys Maitland suddenly appeared and stood staring in upon the spectacle of Mrs. Cowan kissing and sobbing over Perry's hand. Already he had divined the truth, and strove to warn the tear-blinded woman of her presence; but Mrs. Cowan's excitement had increased to the verge of hysteria: she was laughing and crying now by turns, blessing her soldier patient for his faith in the accused sergeant, and then breaking forth anew in indignant expletive, "Who are his accusers? Who dare say thief to him? . . . Not one is fit to look him in the face! 'Twas the very ring his mother gave him, . . . his own! his own!"

And then the doctor seized her and turned her so that she must see Gladys,—Gladys, wild-eyed, panting, staring, tottering forward from the door-way. One sharp cry from the woman's lips, one spring towards the reeling form, and she had caught the girl in her arms:

"Gladys, Gladys, my little pet! my own baby girl! Look up and thank God! I've tried to keep my promise and his secret until he released me. I've tried hard, but it's all useless: I can't, I can't. Oh, Gladys, sweetheart, your mother's smiling down on us this day. Who do you think has come back to us, safe and strong and well and brave? Who but your own brother, your own Archie, Gladys?"

XVIII.

"Yes, certainly very pretty,—now. It's such a pity that English-women grow coarse and stout and red-faced so very soon after they are married." The speaker was Mrs. Belknap, and her soft voice was tuned to a pitch of almost pathetic regret. They were talking of Miss Maitland, who had just been assisted to her saddle by the colonel, and now, followed by the faithful Griggs and escorted by Captain Stryker, was riding away homeward after a brief call at the post. Fort Rossiter, once so humdrum and placid and "stupid," as the ladies termed it, had been the vortex of sensations for a whole fortnight, and one excitement had trodden on the heels of another with such rapidity that people were growing weary.

Perhaps the happiest man in garrison was Captain Stryker: he had refused to believe in the guilt of Sergeant Gwynne when Captain Wayne came to him to say that there were men in his troop who openly accused

the sergeant of having that cherished seal-ring secreted in his chest. So confident was he that he had gone with the captain and Mr. Farnham to the stables and there told Gwynne of the charge against him. Gwynne flushed hotly, denied the truth of the story, but hesitated when asked if he would allow his chest to be searched. This was quickly noted by Wayne and Farnham, and the search was insisted upon. Gwynne then said there were a few items in that chest which he allowed no one to see; he pledged his soldier word that they were nothing but a paper or two, some little photographs, and a book. These he asked permission to remove first; then they might search. But Wayne sternly refused. The sergeant turned very white, set his lips, and hesitated still, until his own captain spoke; then he surrendered his key. Wayne and Farnham bent over the chest while the troop first sergeant rapidly turned over the clothing, books, etc., with trembling hands. There was a little compartment at one side, in which were lying some small items,—a pocket-compass, a pencil-case, some keys, a locket and a neck-chain, and, among these, something wrapped in tissue-paper. This was handed to Captain Wayne, who unrolled the paper, and—there was a massive seal-ring. A crest was cut in the stone, and, taking it to the light, Wayne was able to make out the motto,—“*Quod sursum volo videre.*” It was the ring Maitland had lost.

Stryker looked wonderingly at his sergeant, who stood there as though petrified with amaze and consternation, pale as death, and unable to say a word. Asked to explain the matter, he could only shake his head, and, after a while, hoarsely mutter, “I know nothing about it. I never placed it there.”

“Do you mean to tell me you never saw it before?” asked Wayne, sternly. And Gwynne was silent.

“Is this the first time you ever saw it, I say?” repeated the captain, angrily.

“No, sir: I *have* seen it before,” was the answer.

“Then you must have known ’twas stolen, and you have connived at its concealment,” was Wayne’s triumphant conclusion; and on the report of his officers Colonel Brainard had no alternative but to order Gwynne’s close arrest. Only Stryker’s appeal and guarantee saved the sergeant from confinement in the guard-house.

The next sensation was the sight of Dr. Quin galloping back to the post like mad and bolting unceremoniously into the colonel’s gate. Then Stryker was sent for, and the three officers held an excited conversation. Then the orderly went at a run over to the quarters, and in five minutes Sergeant Gwynne, erect as ever and dressed with scrupulous care, looking anything but like a guilty man, was seen crossing the parade towards his colonel’s house. The men swarmed out on the porches as the tidings went from lip to lip, and some of the Irish troopers in Wayne’s company were remarked as being oddly excited. Just what took place during that interview none could tell, but in ten minutes the news was flying around the garrison that Sergeant Gwynne was released from arrest, and in less than half an hour, to the wonderment of everybody, he was seen riding away towards Dunraven with Dr. Quin, and for two days more did not reappear at Rossiter.

But when the story flashed from house to house about the garrison that Sergeant Gwynne was not Sergeant Gwynne at all, but Mr. Archibald Wyndham Quin Maitland, late of Her Majesty's —th Lancers, and only surviving son of the invalid owner of Dunraven Ranch and other valuable properties, the amaze amounted to almost stupefaction. It was known that old Mr. Maitland was lying desperately weak and ill the day that Quin the doctor came riding back. All manner of stories were told regarding the affecting nature of the interview in which the long-lost son was restored to his overjoyed father, but, like most stories, they were purely the offspring of imagination, for at that interview only three were present: Gladys led her brother to the room and closed the door, while good Mrs. Cowan stood weeping for joy down the long corridor, and Dr. Quin blinked his eyes and fussed and fidgeted and strode around Perry's room with his hands in his pockets, exploding every now and then into sudden comment on the romantic nature of the situation and the idiocy of some people there at Rossiter. "Joy does not kill," he said: "Maitland would have been a dead man by the end of the week, but for this: it will give him a new lease of life."

And it did. Though the flame was feeble and flickering, it was fanned by a joy unutterable. The boy whom the stricken father believed his stubborn pride and condemnation had driven to despair and suicide was restored to him in the prime of manly strength, all tenderness, all forgiveness, and Maitland's whole heart went up in thanksgiving. He begged that Brainard and Stryker would come to him, that he might thank them for their faith in his son; he bade the doctor say to Perry that the moment he could be lifted from his bed he would come to clasp his hand and bless him for being a far better friend to his son than he had been a father.

The sergeant's return to the post was the signal for a general turnout on the part of the men, all of whom were curious to see how he would appear now that his identity was established. Of course his late assailants could not join in the crowd that thronged about him, but they listened with eagerness to everything that was told. "He was just the same as ever," said all accounts. He had never been intimate with any of them, but always friendly and kind. One thing went the rounds like lightning.

"You'll be getting your discharge now, sergeant," said Mrs. Reed, the voluble wife of the leader of the band, "and taking up your residence at the ranch, I suppose. Of course the British minister can get it for you in a minute."

"Not a bit of it, Mrs. Reed," was the laughing answer. "I enlisted to serve Uncle Sam five years, and he's been too good a friend to me to turn from. I shall serve out my time with the —th."

And the sergeant was true to his word. If old Maitland could have prevailed, an application for his son's discharge would have gone to Washington; but this the soldier positively forbade. He had eight months still to serve, and he meant to carry out his contract to the letter. Stryker offered him a furlough, and Gwynne thankfully took a week, that he might be by his father's side and help nurse him to

better health. "By that time, too, the garrison will have grown a little more accustomed to it, sir, and I will have less embarrassment in going on with my work."

Two days before his return to duty there came a modified sensation in the shape of the report that a trooper of Wayne's company had deserted. He was a man who had borne a bad reputation as a turbulent, mischief-making fellow, and when Sergeant Leary heard of his going he was in a state of wild excitement. He begged to be allowed to see his captain, and to him he confessed that one of his little party of three had seen the ring drop from Mr. Maitland's finger the night of the first visit to Dunraven, had managed to pick it up and carry it away in the confusion, and had shown it to his friend in Wayne's troop when they got back. The latter persuaded him to let him take it, as the lockers of the men who were at Dunraven were sure, he said, to be searched. It was known that he had a grudge against Gwynne; he was one of the men who *was* to have gone to the ranch the night they purposed riding down and challenging the Englishmen to come out and fight, but had unaccountably failed at the last moment. They believed that *he* had chosen that night to hide the ring in the sergeant's chest: he could easily have entered through the window. And this explanation—the only one ever made—became at once accepted as the true one throughout the garrison.

During the week of his furlough the sergeant found time to spend many hours by the bedside of Lieutenant Perry, who was rapidly recovering, and who by the end of the week had been lifted into an easy invalid-chair and wheeled in to see Mr. Maitland. When *not* with Mr. Perry, the young trooper's tongue was ever wagging in his praise. He knew many a fine officer and gallant gentleman in the service of the old country, he said, and he admired many a captain and subaltern in that of his adopted land, but the first one to whom he "warmed"—the first one to win his affection—was the young cavalryman who had met his painful wound in their defence. Old Maitland listened to it all eagerly,—he had already given orders that the finest thoroughbred at Dunraven should be Perry's the moment he was able to mount again,—and he was constantly revolving in mind how he could show his appreciation of the officers who had befriended his son. Mrs. Cowan, too, never tired of hearing Perry's praises, and eagerly questioned when the narrator flagged. There was another absorbed auditor, who never questioned, and who listened with downcast eyes. It was she who seldom came near Perry during his convalescence, she who startled and astonished the young fellow beyond measure, the day the ambulance came down to drive him back to the fort, by withdrawing the hand he had impulsively seized when at last she appeared to bid him adieu, and cutting short his eager words with "Mrs. Belknap will console you, I dare say," and abruptly leaving the room.

Poor Ned! In dire distress and perplexity he was driven back to Rossiter, and that very evening he did a most sensible and fortunate thing: he told Mrs. Sprague all about it; and, instead of condoling with him and bidding him strive to be patient and saying that all would come right in time, the little woman's kind eyes shone with de-

light, her cheeks flushed with genuine pleasure; she fairly sprang from her chair, and danced up and down and clapped her hands and laughed with glee, and then, when Perry ruefully asked her if that was the sympathy he had a right to expect from her, she only laughed the more, and at last broke forth with,—

"Oh, you great, stupid, silly boy! You ought to be wild with happiness. Can't you see she's jealous?"

And the very next day she had a long talk with Dr. Quin, whose visits to Dunraven still continued; and one bright afternoon when Gladys Maitland rode up to the fort to return calls, she managed to have quite a chat with her, despite the fact that Mrs. Belknap showed a strong desire to accompany that fair English girl in all three of her visits. In this effort, too, the diplomatic services of Captain Stryker proved rather too much for the beauty of the garrison. Was it possible that Mrs. Sprague had enlisted him also in the good cause? Certain it is that the dark-featured captain was Miss Maitland's escort as she left the garrison, and that it was with the consciousness of impending defeat that Mrs. Belknap gave utterance to the opening sentence of this chapter: Mr. Perry had distinctly avoided her ever since his return.

One lovely evening late in May Mr. Perry was taking his first ride on the new horse, a splendid bay, and a perfect match for Gladys Maitland's favorite mount. Already had this circumstance excited smiling comment in the garrison; but if the young man himself had noted the close resemblance it conveyed no blissful augury. Everybody remarked that he had lost much of his old buoyancy and life; and it must be confessed he was not looking either blithe or well. Parke had suggested riding with him,—an invitation which Perry treated so coldly that the junior stopped to think a moment, and began to see through the situation; and so Mr. Perry was suffered to set forth alone that evening, and no one was surprised when, after going out of the west gate as though bent on riding up the Monee, he was presently seen to have made the circuit of the post and was slowly cantering down towards the lower valley. Out on the eastern prairie another horseman could be seen; and presently the two came together. Colonel Brainard took down his binocular and gazed out after them.

"I declare," said he, "those two figures are so much alike I cannot tell which of them is Perry."

"Then the other is Sergeant Gwynne, colonel," said Stryker, quietly. "Put him in our uniform, and it would indeed be hard to tell the two figures apart. Mr. Maitland told me last week that that was what so startled and struck him the first time he saw Perry."

"How is Mr. Maitland now, do you know?"

"He gets no better. After the first week of joy and thanksgiving over his boy's restoration to him, the malady seemed to reassert itself. Dunraven will have a new master by winter, I fancy."

The colonel was silent a moment. Then he suddenly asked,—

"By the way, how was it that Gwynne *wasn't* drowned? I never understood that."

"He never meant to be," said Stryker. "He told Perry all about it. He was ruined, he thought, in his profession and his own country,

and he knew his father's inexorable pride: so he simply decided to put an end to Archie Maitland and start a new life for himself. He wrote his letters and arranged his property with that view, and called the steward to enable him to swear he was in his state-room after the steamer weighed anchor. Then in a jiffy he was over the side in the darkness; it was flood-tide, and he was an expert swimmer; he reached a coasting-vessel lying near; he had money, bought his passage to France, after a few days at Cape Town, and then came to America and enlisted. He got a confession out of one of the irregulars who was with him, Perry says, and that was one of the papers he was guarding so jealously. He had given others to Perry that very night."

"They seemed to take to each other like brothers from the start," said the colonel, with a quiet smile.

"Just about," answered Captain Stryker.

Meantime, Perry and Sergeant Gwynne have been riding slowly down the valley. Night has come upon Dunraven by the hour they reach the northern gate,—no longer closed against them,—and as they near the house Perry slowly dismounts. "I'll take the horses to the stable myself: I want to," says his trooper friend, and for the second time the young officer stands upon the veranda at the door-way, then holds his hand as he hears again the soft melody of the piano floating out upon the still night-air. Slowly and not without pain he walks around to the east front, striving to move with noiseless steps. At last he stands by the open casement, just where he had paused in surprise that night a month ago, and, slowly drawing aside one heavy fold of curtain, gazes longingly in at Gladys Maitland, seated there at the piano, just where he first saw her lovely face and form. Her fingers are wandering idly over the keys, playing little fragmentary snatches,—first one melody, then another; her sweet blue eyes are fixed on vacancy,—she sees nothing in that room, or near it; she is paler than when he first looked upon her, and there are traces of deep anxiety and of some hidden sorrow in the fair, fresh face. Presently, under the soft touch of her fingers, a sweet, familiar melody comes rippling forth. He remembers it instantly; it is the same he heard the night of his first visit,—that exquisite "Spring Song" of Mendelssohn's,—and he listens, spell-bound. All of a sudden the sweet strains are broken off, the music ceases; she has thrown herself forward, bowed her queenly head upon her arms, and, leaning over the key-board, her form is shaken by a storm of passionate tears. Perry hurls aside the sheltering curtain and limps rapidly across the soft and noiseless rug. She never dreams of his presence until, close at her side, a voice she has learned to know and know well—a voice tremulous with love, sympathy, and yearning—murmurs only her name, "Gladys," and, starting up, she looks one instant into his longing eyes.

Sergeant "Gwynne" Maitland, lifting the heavy *portière* a moment later, stops short at the entrance, gazes one second at the picturesque scene at the piano, drops the *portière*, and vanishes, unnoticed.

Things seem changed at Dunraven of late years. The —th are still at Rossiter; so is Lieutenant Perry. It may be the climate, or

association with an American sisterhood, or—who knows?—perhaps somebody has told her of Mrs. Belknap's prediction, but Mrs. Perry has not yet begun to grow coarse, red-faced, or stout. She is wonderfully popular with the ladies of the —th, and has found warm friends among them, but Mrs. Sprague of the infantry is the woman she particularly fancies, and her gruff old kinsman Dr. Quin is ever a welcome guest at their fireside. It was he, she told her husband long after, who undid the mischief Mrs. Belknap had 'been able to sow in one brief conversation. "I've known that young woman ever since she wore pinafores, Gladys. She has some good points, too, but her one idiosyncrasy is that every man she meets should bow down to and worship her. She is an Alexander in petticoats, sighing for new worlds to conquer, has been a coquette from the cradle, and—what she can't forgive in Ned Perry is that he simply did not fall in love with her as she thought he had."

Down at Dunraven the gates are gone, the doors are ever hospitably open. Ewen is still manager *de jure*, but young Mr. Maitland, the proprietor, is manager *de facto*, and, though there is constant going and coming between the fort and the ranch, and the officers of the —th ride in there at all hours, what makes the ranchman so popular among the rank and file is the fact that Sergeant "Gwynne," as they still call him, has a warm place in his heart for one and all, and every year when the date of his enlistment in the —th comes round he gives a barbecue dinner to the men, whereat there are feasting and drinking of healths and song and speech-making, and Leary and Donovan and even the recreant Kelly are apt to be boisterously prominent on such occasions, but blissfully so,—for there hasn't been a shindy of any kind since their old comrade stepped into his possessions at Dunraven Ranch.

THE END.

CAPTAIN CHARLES KING.

CAPTAIN CHARLES KING was born October 12, 1844, at Albany, New York. He comes of a family that is distinguished in literature and politics. His father, Rufus King, was for some years minister resident for the Pontifical States at Rome, and during the civil war became brigadier-general of volunteers. His grandfather, Charles King, LL.D., was president of Columbia College. His great-grandfather, Rufus King, was one of the signers of the Constitution, was long United States Senator from the State of New York, and was twice minister at the Court of St. James. On his mother's side Captain King is descended from the Indian apostle, John Eliot.

One year after the birth of his son, Mr. Rufus King resigned from the engineer corps of the army and removed to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to become editor and proprietor of the Milwaukee *Sentinel*. Thus it came about that Charles's boyhood was spent in the growing West and on the shores of Lake Michigan, where he still makes his home. In 1858 he was sent to New York City to be educated at the grammar-school of Columbia College by Dr. Charles Anthon, and in June, 1861, he passed his examination for the Freshman class in the college. But the Southern States had seceded; Fort Sumter had been fired upon; the civil war had begun. Within twenty-four hours after he had passed his examination, Charles King turned up in the camp of the Wisconsin volunteers at Washington, D.C., drum-sticks in hand.

He had been "marker" of the First Regiment of Wisconsin militia before going to New York, and a drummer in the Light Guard. For a few weeks he was busy teaching his fellow Badger boys the use of their drum-sticks, and then, at the organization of the Wisconsin brigade,—the command of which was tendered to his father,—the sixteen-year-old boy was made mounted orderly at brigade head-quarters.

In this capacity he saw his first real soldiering in Virginia. It was his great good fortune to be the guide of General Winfield S. Hancock the first time that gallant soldier crossed the Potomac at the head of his brigade. In October, 1861, with the promise of a cadetship at West Point from President Lincoln himself, Charles King began to take even a livelier interest in military affairs; and in June, 1862, he entered on his academic career. He is remembered by those who knew him at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, as one who hated mathematics and devoted only so much of his active brain to the mastering of the exact sciences as was necessary to fulfil the absolute requirements of the institution. Nevertheless Charley King was a marked man from the day of his entrance as a "plebe," June, 1862, until his appointment to the coveted rank of cadet corporal the following year. In 1864 he was cadet first-sergeant of Company B, and he was appointed cadet adjutant in 1865. To those who did not know the commandants of the United States corps of cadets—Colonel Henry Clitz and Colonel Henry M. Black, the latter now

commanding the Twenty-Third Infantry, but then major of the Seventh Infantry—this succession of cadet military honors does not mean much. The appointments of cadet officers are made mainly by the commandant. King was made cadet corporal in 1863, because he gave promise of being a good soldier; his promotion in 1864 to the most coveted cadet military rank possible was proof that he *was* a good soldier; and this standard of military proficiency and personal bearing was further confirmed when he became a first-class man in 1865. Adjutant King had a way of carrying himself that attracted the attention of the ladies and excited the envy of his fellows and the approbation of the tactical officers. He gloried in the functions of his office. He was not spoiled by the blazing chevrons of his rank, and was popular with all the lower-classmen. His voice was clear as a bell. His clothes always fitted him. He was one of those fellows who, after a skirmish drill, in exercises in the riding-hall, on the plain, or in the laboratory, or building pontoon-bridges, or on mounted artillery drill, always looked as neat as a pin. He was a manly fellow, withal. To the fullest extent, he was a ringleader in any exploit not inconsistent with military duty: *there* he always stopped short. His instincts were military in the best sense of the term. The writer of these lines first knew him in 1864. I was a plebe then, and earth had few more miserable mortals than I during July and August of that year. The army officers on duty at the Military Academy had all gone through plebe camp, with its attendant bedevilmnts, and the tacit sentiment of the institution in those days was that it was all right for the yearlings and other upper-classmen to vex the plebes with bodily and mental labor, and harass and "yank" them by night, and, in general, to make them feel that there was nothing on earth, or in the sea, or in the air, that was not better than they. To such unfortunate ones a cheery word of kindly encouragement from a cadet officer was an oasis in a desert. King had a sunny temper and a wonderfully exhilarating way about him. He was liked personally and respected in his official capacity by the classes of 1868-69.

General Cullom's Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy shows graduate No. 2136 to have been Charles King. He was graduated number twenty-two in a class of forty-one members, number twenty-one being the lamented William Preston Dixon, who died on the 6th of October, 1866, from exhaustion consequent upon his efforts to save a woman in the wreck of the steamer Evening Star. Lieutenant King was kept back at the Military Academy, June to August, 1866, as artillery instructor,—a compliment extended only to those subaltern officers who, as cadets, have especially distinguished themselves by the practical demonstration of abilities as instructors in some tactical branch of the science of war.

From the fall of 1866 until January, 1869, Lieutenant King was attached to Light Battery K, First Artillery, serving at New Orleans, Louisiana. On the latter date he was transferred to Light Battery C, at Fort Hamilton, New York. He served a few weeks on recruiting-service at Cincinnati, Ohio, in the spring of 1869, but was ordered to West Point as Instructor in Cavalry Tactics, Artillery Tactics, and

Horsemanship. This was a rare compliment. Of the nine hundred and odd other subaltern officers of the army, eligible for such detail,—and a large majority desirous of it,—the assignment of Lieutenant King for a *second* tour of duty as a military instructor for the corps of cadets is a fact which speaks for itself. At the Military Academy he served as commandant of Company C. He was relieved from duty in October, 1871, in order to enable him to accept a staff position. He was transferred from First Artillery to Fifth Cavalry on December 31, 1871, and was assigned to K Troop. The troop had then left Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming Territory, and was *en route* to Camp Hualpai, Arizona Territory, which station it reached February 15, 1872. The subject of this sketch did not accompany K Troop on this march, he having been selected by brevet Major-General William H. Emory as a personal aide-de-camp, and was also appointed acting judge advocate of the Department of the Gulf, with station at New Orleans, Louisiana. He retained the position of confidential aide from November, 1871, to February, 1874.

On April 7, 1872, the International race, gentlemen riders, was ridden on the old Metairie track under the auspices of the Metairie Jockey Club. England, Ireland, Austria, and France were represented. The challengers were Count Victor Crenneville, of the Austrian Hussars, and Captain George Rosenlecher, of France. At first no champion seemed available for the United States. But Lieutenant Charles King, returning to the city from a tour of inspection through Mississippi, heard of the unaccepted challenge open to the United States, and at once obtained General Emory's permission to take up the gauntlet. A great crowd was present on the day of the race, and the judges' stand was a beautiful sight. It was too soon after the war for a Yankee to have many friends among the fair ones of New Orleans, and, while the blue and gold bars of Captain Rosenlecher, the scarlet and white of the Austrian, the cherry-red and dark blue of Mr. Stuart, who rode for England, and the green of Ireland, were to be seen everywhere among the parasols or ribbons and colors of the ladies, not more than one or two had the courage to wear King's colors. He was attired in the colors of his old college,—Columbia,—sky-blue and white, and looked the gentleman rider to perfection. I have seen his photograph: a white silk jockey-cap, blue shirt, immaculate-fitting riding-breeches and boots, the latter weighing six ounces. King's weight was one hundred and forty-three pounds. It was a beautiful race. The "Yank" won it by just two horse-lengths. After the gold-mounted whip was presented to him from the judges' stand, and the other gentlemen had cordially congratulated the victor, he took his prize across the track and laid it in the lap of the young lady who had accompanied General and Mrs. Emory to the scene, and who wore the aide-de-camp's colors. She has that whip yet, and shakes it at him sometimes, but has never used it on their children. They were married the fall following.

Their honeymoon was spent in no little excitement, for the riots were in full blast in New Orleans that winter of 1872 and '73, and the aide-de-camp had full share in all the service. He was complimented by General Emory for coolness and gallantry. During the year 1872,

King's troop, K, Fifth Cavalry, was employed in alternate months of field-service, from its station, Camp Hualpai, Arizona Territory. In July, 1873, the troop left Camp Hualpai for Camp Verde, in Northern Arizona, a region so infested with hostile Apaches that incessant service in the field was necessary for all our troops. After facing unreconstructed rebels in turbulent New Orleans until the spring of 1874, King asked to be relieved from staff duty and to be ordered to join his troop. Reluctantly his application was acceded to. During his service in New Orleans King had every opportunity, without in any particular neglecting his military duties, of mingling with the most exclusive society in the city. He was eminently a society man, yet he seldom availed himself of this privilege. This subordination of his tendencies was due to the fact that he was proud of a uniform and a profession not especially honored in the Crescent City at that period. King was one of those army officers who would not in citizen's attire accept any hospitalities where he would not be equally welcome if clad in his uniform. Adherence to this principle debarred him from a good deal of social enjoyment in those days.

In the campaign against the Apaches in Arizona Territory (1874-76) the Fifth Cavalry, with King in command of his troop, was conspicuous above all the others. General Sherman publicly stated that he considered their services "unequalled by those of any cavalry regiment during our late Civil War." General Crook, the division commander, also singled out the Fifth Cavalry for especial praise in distributing commendations on the uniform bravery of the men and officers under his command.

In an engagement at Diamond Butte on May 25, 1874, King's gallantry won from President Grant a recommendation to the Senate for the brevet commission of captain. The Senate referred the matter to the Military Commission, and there it was lost. On November 1, 1874, King was dangerously wounded at Sunset Pass. He was then only saved from falling into the hands of the savages by the devotion of Sergeant Bernard Taylor, a devotion carried to the point of insubordination, for the latter refused to save himself, although ordered to do so, and held the howling Apaches in check until reinforcements arrived.

It was characteristic of King that he should have exposed himself to the certainty of torture and a horrible death by ordering Sergeant Taylor to leave him. It is characteristic also that, in his wounded and exhausted condition, the first thing he did on his arrival at Camp Verde was to dictate an official report, in which he praised the "superb courage" of Sergeant Taylor and made honorable mention of other brave soldiers. And it is gratifying to note that Congress awarded a medal of honor to Taylor. King himself gained no recognition. His only brevets were his wounds, received in action.

For months King was laid up with a shattered sabre arm. Before the ugly wound had healed he was in the saddle again, sharing in every fight, and suffering all the terrible privations of the Fifth Cavalry in the Big Horn and Yellowstone expedition of 1876. At the close of the campaign the regimental commander, Wesley Merritt, rewarded

him with the adjutancy of the regiment. This was in October, 1876, and Charles King did honor to the position, to the officer who appointed him, and to the regiment, in that capacity, for the next fifteen months.

The regiment had but little time in garrison, for early in the spring of 1877 the Fifth Cavalry and its adjutant were up along the Big Horn range again. The great railway-riots of that year brought by rail to Chicago and Council Bluffs some of King's regiment, many of the representatives bronzed, bearded, with ragged shirts and buckskin breeches, but all ablaze with cartridges. The regiment was only three weeks on this kind of home-guard duty when the command was sent scurrying back across the continent to meet and head off Chief Joseph and the Nez Percés in their famous raid from Idaho to the edge of the States, *via* the Yellowstone Park.

That was a glorious summer and autumn for Adjutant King. He loved the mountain and the saddle. His idea of happiness in the discharge of what, alas! *was* his profession was activity and scenery and the spice of occasional sharp fighting.

1878 was for his regiment another year of mountain-scouting, but it was also a year of suffering for King. The Arizona wound, so far from healing, had grown worse. There was incessant exfoliation of the bone, and a drain upon the system that proved too much for him. He had never spared himself; he loved his calling; his future was bright with promise; he was not half the threescore and ten years allotted to man; but he was forced to ask that he be sent before a retiring board. In June, 1879, having meanwhile been promoted captain of A Troop, King joined the little array of shelved warriors on the retired list, and, except for an occasional and deeply-relished visit, saw his old regiment no more.

After his retirement he went speedily to his old State,—was for two years one of the faculty of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and began at once his connection with the National Guard which has continued to this day. Governor Jeremiah Rusk made him colonel and aide-de-camp in March, 1882, and he holds that position now.

King has a bright and happy home on Farwell Avenue, Milwaukee, up on the bluffs overlooking the dancing waters of Lake Michigan. They—he and the lady who owns the Metairie whip—have three children, two daughters and a little fellow who is a chip of his cavalry father and never so happy as when perched up on the saddle in front of him. Riding is still the captain's favorite exercise, and he had a gorgeous time of it with the old Fifth Cavalry down in the Indian Territory and Texas, last April,—hunting and scouting with his comrades. It was there he picked up the scenes of "Dunraven Ranch." It may be supposed that officers of the Fifth Cavalry suggested some of the characters; but, contrary to general impression, that regiment has furnished very few of them in all his stories combined. There were only two or three in "The Colonel's Daughter" and "Marion's Faith." "Billy Ray," who won so many friends, was never in the Fifth Cavalry in his life. This is a fact, despite the confident assertions of a good many army readers and one or two knowing critics. "I don't know why it is supposed I never knew anybody outside the Fifth

Cavalry," said Captain King on receiving a letter which located the entire *dramatis personæ* of his novels in that regiment. "One thing seems certain, no one concedes that it is possible for me to create a character,—even such humdrum creatures as these people of my stories happen to be. In point of fact, most of them are as purely imaginary as are all the incidents,—except the Indian-fighting."

The Fifth Cavalry were right in one estimate, however,—viz., that "Jack Truscott" had his original in their midst; and to this day the intimacy and friendship between the author and his hero exist as in the old days when they lived and campaigned together. In his sketch, "The Worst Man in the Troop," published in *Lippincott's Magazine* in September, 1883, he has told of the daring and devotion of the brave Irish sergeant who rescued his wounded commander from the howling Apaches.

Poor Taylor has been dead many a year, but the lieutenant who came dashing up the rocky mountain-side at the head of the reinforcements that saved the day was "Jack Truscott." Jack's voice was gone by the time he reached his young commander and comrade that eventful Sunday. He could only lean over and whisper his anxious and breathless inquiry, "Much hurt, old man?" and received, in reply, the combined assurance and order in the same instant, "Arm busted,—that's all. Pitch in and clean 'em out." One Spartan lieutenant obeyed the other, and in five minutes more the Indians were scattering for their lives and "Jack" could come back and wash the blood from his comrade's face and bind up the gaping hole in his shoulder.

In the study where Captain King writes his soldier stories is the veritable Navajo blanket in which the soldiers bundled their crippled leader and bore him down the mountain-side when the fight was over. There, too, is "Jack's" picture in the old uniform among those of more than twenty other officers of the "Dandy Fifth,"—General Merritt being in the foreground and Adjutant King to his rear; but "Jack Truscott" has long since laid down the sabre and discarded the regimentals. He has extensive and lucrative mining and cattle interests now in Montana. Time has thinned the hair on his massive head and added weight to the stalwart form; but the voice rings out with all the old vim when occasion requires. Only last June, King sat in the gallery of the great auditorium at Chicago when the Republican Convention was in session. Chairman after chairman of State delegations was greeted with impatient shouts of "Louder!" but when "Jack" came to announce the vote of his colleagues, King looked radiant and reminiscent when "Montana!" was called and "Jack Truscott" rose to his six feet four and his voice went sailing like a trumpet note through the immense vaulted building. The hero of "The Colonel's Daughter" is a leader of men now, despite the fact that he long since quit soldiering.

King in everything save that crippled arm of his is a soldier. With him it is the soldier and the soldier life that predominate. The interior of his up-stairs study is in keeping with the profession and the tastes of the occupant. Suspended from the walls are the shoulder-knots, sword-belt, sabre, and forage-cap that did service, years ago, in Arizona. The fifth numeral is in the cap front, and in the centre of the

insignia of rank. Buckskin leggings,—given him by Buffalo Bill,—embroidered by Indian hands with parti-colored beads, are there. The portrait in oil of his father, General Rufus King, looks down upon maps and faded blue prints of the region about Tonto Basin, Arizona,—a spot destined to become as much of a place of resort for tourists and artists as the Falls of the Yosemite or Niagara. In one of the drawers of Captain King's writing-desk are the note-books, itineraries, and travel-routes kept by him with fidelity and neatness during his active military career. The magnificent presentation-sword owned by General King is displayed by his soldier-author son in the reception-room down-stairs; there too, on the mantel, is the Metairie whip, relic of the New Orleans race; but the photographs of King's soldier-friends are all kept in his study, and lending a charm to it all is the refined, kindly, handsome face of the host, whose voice, like the touch of his bridle-hand, is soft and sincere as a woman's, but can be stern and cold as steel.

Philip Reade, First Lieutenant Third Infantry, U.S.A.

TO ALL WOMEN.

I.

O SORROWING women, ye who weep in vain,
 Who uncaressed sob on through the dark night,
 With broken wings that ache to feel the light,
 Strained out above joy's corpse untimely slain,—
 All ye who, pure or fallen, live in pain,
 Who suffer woman-pangs,—or wrong or right,—
 Yearning through blistering tears for some lost sight,
 Wooing through alien sounds some hushed refrain,—
 All ye who pine to cease rather than die,
 Who dread a second consciousness, and long
 Only for peace as peace is known to graves,
 Not to the buried,—unto you I cry,
 My heart yearns over you, to you belong
 These words of love, as to the sea its waves.

II.

Dear God, that I could gather to my heart
 In one supreme pang all the awful throes
 That wrench the heart of women!—take their woes,
 As from tired children's hands that slide apart
 We lift the burden that has made them smart,
 Or from some stem whereon a sweet flower grows
 Strip all the thorns, and give them back the rose!
 I could bear bravely all my life this part,

Could but their suffering share my grave with me.
 Oh, I would live and die a thousand times
 Could but my death at last buy women rest.
 Yet, loving Christ, since such things cannot be,
 Grant that each day my love, in many climes,
 Reach out its comfort to some anguished breast.

III.

Sometimes, when walls seem enemies, and sleep
 Given to others like a cruel jest
 Sent for my mocking, I, being mad for rest,
 Creep out all lonely past the huddled sheep,—
 Stirring with drowsy tang of bells that keep
 Soft iterance through the whispery night, where nest
 And nestling away, by winnowing wind caressed,—
 There fling myself along the grass to weep,
 Sobs gathering, hands gripped hard into the earth,—
 The blessed earth that takes us back at last!—
 And think, "Ah, could this knowledge now befall
 Some woman who for long hath thought me worth
 Only her hatred, she would hold me fast,
 And strive to comfort me, forgetting all."

IV.

Ah, sisters, if we only knew each grief
 That rends the other, we could never hate,
 Nor ever think Remorse could come too late,
 So she brought with her a more kind belief.
 Most surely Prejudice is a foul thief
 Who steals Love's blossom through the very gate
 Which we would shut against him. It is fate
 That hands which might extend us sweet relief
 Press down upon its thorns our coronet,
 And when we sob for water reach us gall,
 And when our hearts ache thrust our sides with scorn.
 O women, women, do ye then forget
 How all must stumble though some only fall?
 How ye might stay with hope the feet forlorn?

V.

God is eternal loneliness, but we,—
 We have each other. Shall we turn aside
 From what He, though companionless, hath died
 To give us? Having eyes, shall we not see?
 Having hearts, shall we not give most tenderly,
 Reaching forth a love as vast and deep and wide
 As that by Christ bestowed even when denied?
 What we would have in others we must be.

It is the heart athrob behind the creed
 That makes its meaning live in other hearts.
 It is the man and woman, not the pen,
 That wins the palm from fame: thus all who read:
 "If of themselves these be the littlest parts,
 What then the unwritten thoughts now lost to men!"

VI.

O hearts forsaken, hearts forlorn, oppressed,
 My arms are strong, my breast is warm and true;
 Here is sweet love, if love ye never knew;
 Here dear unquestioning sympathy, here rest.
 Tired birds of broken wings, make here your nest;
 No one shall ask from what strange land ye flew,
 Ye shall be all to me, and I to you,
 And each forever in the other blessed.
 Come to me, come, queen, beggar, vile or pure,
 So ye but love and long for higher ken,
 With tremulous eyes fast on eternity,
 And faltering feet that faith will yet make sure,
 O sad ones, come! Christ, Thou didst die for men,
 Let me but die for women,—live for Thee!

Amélie Rives.

WITH THE FRUITS AND THE WINES.

FROM the foot of Walnut Street we crossed the river and were whirled away on a lightning train, unconscious of the fact that we were speeding each mile in a minute and a half, while luxuriating in a splendidly-appointed car, passing by a score of thriving villages and towns that have sprung up along this rapid-transit line,—by Ham-monton, one of our first objective points, the centre of the greatest fruit-growing district near to Philadelphia, and by Egg Harbor, celebrated for the qualities of its wines,—when, behold, as suddenly we slowed down, we found ourselves in the heart of the "American Brighton," the peerless City by the Sea.

We were all in excursion-trim, with no baggage to incommode us, with no engagements to delay us, and on a decisive vote we took carriages for the drive along the sands, while the tide was still low and the fresh loveliness of a perfect September morning was lingering still.

The drive along the Atlantic beach at low water is perhaps the finest in the country, and was lined with handsome equipages containing so many people whom we knew that we were all kept bowing and smiling for the first half-score of miles, with the exception of Captain L., who was altogether occupied with his marine glass, scanning every sail that made its appearance on the southern horizon. At last he

exclaimed, enthusiastically rising in his seat, "There she comes! there she comes, wing and wing!"

"What is it, captain?" Madam nervously inquired.

"The Minerva, my dear madam,—the yacht. And what do you think of it, Miss Sallie?—the wind bids fair to hold, and to-night is the full of the moon."

The two carriages we occupied were driving side by side when Miss Sallie leaned out and asked Mr. D. if we would be back from the vineyards in time to sail on the "bright and the moonlit deep."

"If you wish it so," that gentleman gallantly replied; and it indeed appeared in many ways that he had discovered a graceful and altogether complacent behavior was the best policy of forwarding his suit.

We were his guests, and the object of this excursion, which he originated, was to show us many things as beautiful as the flowers which we had been among together, "and beautiful," he added, "with the beauty of utility."

"I shall lay the programme before you at dinner-time," he said, "and submit it to a vote. The wines of the vineyards above here I suggest as the first objective point."

We turned back with the rising tide, determined to take—which was it?—a bath or a swim on the high water.

The old gentleman declared his intention of trying a warm salt-water bath, and Miss Rachel and Madam concluded to follow his example, which left a party of five of us to tumble about in the splendid surf of a stiff southeastern breeze.

It was not until we had donned our suits, and met on the sands, that our curiosity was satisfied as to what Miss Sallie had in the satchel she carried, that puffed it out so distressingly. To the great delight of Captain L., she appeared in a costume at once unique and elegant both in design and perfect aptitude for the purpose of buffeting with the waves.

"I suppose of course you are a good swimmer," she remarked to the captain.

"I am delighted to learn that you are," he answered, joyously.

While Ernestine, Mr. D., and I were content to take our dip near the shore, this couple swam out together beyond the surf and far away outside all the other bathers,—perhaps for half a mile,—which caused Mr. D. and myself to become nervous on the young woman's account, while Ernestine was perfectly composed, and it was not until she noticed our unexpressed anxiety that she said, "Oh, don't be alarmed about Sallie; she is all right; but I hope you don't think Mr. L. will give out. Sallie has been an excellent swimmer from a little girl."

After the ride down to the sea, the drive on its shores, and the close interview with old Ocean by a bath in the briny waters, we had a keen appetite for the dinner that one of the many of Atlantic City's hotels set forth in tasteful style.

It was after the meal, in the parlors, that we met so many friends, representative of the "survival of the fittest" in the Eastern society that circles around, and by whom we were introduced to innumerable others

from the far South and West that find it more congenial in the City by the Sea than at Nahant, Newport, or Narragansett Pier.

At the signal from the old gentleman, we assembled around Mr. D. "My children," the father of the family commenced, with a mellow twinkle in his eye and with his usual deep and settled voice,—which two characteristics were in a great degree expressive of the humorously kind and yet positive qualities of this venerable man,—“we devoted a delightful day to searching into the wonderful nature and to a criticism of the remarkable beauty in the flowers, and now we propose to devote several days to a study of fruits, which are distinguished from flowers because they produce something edible, healthy, and nourishing, and perhaps to inquire into some few other things that go to beautifying homes. And remember it is to the establishment of a home” (and here he glanced at the slightly-blushing countenance of his fair first-born) “that all of our inquiries are directed,—a home beautiful in itself, and surrounded by everything that is beautifully useful.” Here the old gentleman bowed to Mr. D., and ceased.

“We first propose to take a jaunt this afternoon,” Mr. D. followed on, “to Egg Harbor City, from which we will drive out to and through the vineyards of the neighborhood, inspecting the grapes and passing judgment on the wines. To-morrow we will go to Hammonton and pass through the orchards of a great variety of fruits.”

“But to-night,” interposed Sallie; “where will we be to-night?”

“Why,” answered Mr. D., bowing low, smiling on the face, but we doubt if he was smiling in the heart, “we will return to Atlantic City and be at the pleasure of the captain for a moonlit dash on the sea.”

We took the afternoon train for Egg Harbor, and in less than a half-hour covered the eighteen miles between the two places.

Carriages were awaiting us, by the wise provision of Mr. D., who proved in many ways a master manager of excursion-arrangements.

We drove through the thriving little city into the country, with vineyards lining the road here and there. Some four miles out we reached the vineyards of the most prominent viniculturist of the settlement, and were received by a gentleman who is a musician, poet, linguist, and scholar, as well as a successful wine-grower.

He, of necessity, had emigrated to this country after the troubles of 1848 in Germany, and for thirty years of the intervening time since then he has devoted his whole attention to making wine.

As a refreshment after our ride, he set some wine before us of the vintage of 1868.

It was beautiful in its ruby color, delicious to the taste, and refreshing in its effect; but its name excited the curiosity of all,—*Iolink*.

Mr. D., who is a connoisseur of wines, imported or native, asked from whence such an altogether unusual name had been derived, and was answered at first by our host's very broad smile.

“My friends,” he went on to say, “I have had a great many distinguished guests at this vineyard, and on numberless occasions it has been suggested to me to adopt foreign names for my wines,—such as this or that claret, this or that Burgundy, and so on; but I have adopted native names as free from affectation or deception as the wines

are from adulteration. Iolink is the cry of the bobolink in the spring,—which is the same as the reed-bird in the fall. The transposition between the two has been made familiar by the pen of that delightful humorist, Washington Irving.

"I name another wine the Jersica, in compliment to my adopted State.

"Still another was without name until the Bi-Centennial time, when I sent several cases aboard the *Welcome*,—which you may remember made a cruise up the Delaware. I requested that they christen the wine; and unanimously they named it the *Welcome*.

"Still another I have named the *Franklin*, in honor of that great man.

"These four, two white and two red, complete the list."

Here Ernestine suggested that we should stroll through the vineyards.

She was more interested in the grapes than in their product, and we wended our way through the long avenues of the thrifty vines; but, sad to say, the rot had been severe among most of the varieties this year. Both the Concord and the Martha (white Concord) were sadly affected; the Virginia Seedling had failed to withstand it; while the Catawba was equally affected by the mildew: in fact, this last is so constantly affected by mildew, that acres of it have been rooted up and replanted with others.

Yet there was one grape that had withstood both mildew and rot,—the *Clevner*,—the history of which is interesting.

The first year it fruited the grapes all fell to the ground; the second year some of the bunches remained intact, and many growers, becoming disgusted with it, rooted it up; while some held on to it through a series of years, until finally it seems to have adapted itself to the soil and climate, until now it is luxuriant in its yield, free from the blighting effects of either mildew or rot in the midst of many other hardy varieties whose fruit has withered away to nothing.

We had passed, on our drive out, many vineyards in which where was supposed to be a bunch of grapes we only saw a brown paper bag pinned around the stem.

"Is it an effective protection?" asked Mr. D.

"It has been tried with us," said our host, "as a protection against the rot. We have not had, as yet, any rose-bugs or other insects to contend with against which bags are a protection, but we use them to exclude the air: the rot and the mildew are in the air.

"They are of no practical benefit in large vineyards, for this reason: they must be pinned on at precisely the right time,—just at the time when the stamen has come into vital connection with the pistillates. It requires great judgment to determine this, and there are not enough hands with the requisite judgment to bag a large vineyard before it is too late."

"There are so many varieties of grapes,—have you tried them all?" Ernestine was anxious to know.

"Not all; none but the hardy ones,—and of those only one of a class. The *Catawba* is a failure, the *Concord* does well some years, the

Virginia Seedling has been generally successful—but the Clevner is a great success.”

As our time was growing short, we acceded to the solicitous invitation of our host to view the vaults, where some thirty thousand gallons of wine of twenty different vintages were stored.

We were a little astonished to see a lunch spread in the extensive vaults, and amused at the explanation of our entertainer.

“Excuse me,” he said, “this is but a slight display of anything very substantial or elegant to eat, but it is a good rule never to drink without eating, even though you drink but a glass of light wine.”

“And that is one of the first principles of temperance,” the old gentleman explained.

“Pure wines as against strong liquors is another,” the wine-grower exclaimed.

“Both of which are true,” Mr. D. added. “Pure and light wine does not bring about that insatiable desire which becomes uncontrollable and ends in intoxication. Wine-drinkers are very seldom drunkards.”

The Welcome was a very delicious, rich, golden wine.

“Won’t you give us a toast?” asked Captain L. of Miss Sallie. We raised the glasses to our lips.

“Several of them,” she answered, “as we only take a sip at a time. To the home to be established,” as she drew her arm around her sister’s waist. “To Mr. D., who has brought us on such a delightful utilitarian quest,”—to which Mr. D. drained his glass.

“To the pioneer viniculturist, our host, the genius of the vineyards and these vaults, and to the delicacy of his native wines.” And certainly we were all pleased to drink this toast in still another variety.

“And to”—and it was with an expression of great pleasure that this beautiful woman raised the glass of golden-colored Jersica to her lips as we drank to—“the white-winged Minerva and a moonlight flight on the waves.”

Before we left, the captain interviewed the vineyardman to inquire into some other ideas on wine. He learned, as he told afterwards, that none of the old vintages could be bought for any money; nor, on the other hand, could any be bought from these vaults less than five years old. The captain had to inquire about trains, and, luckily for his idea to have the native product aboard the boat, some cases of the “Welcome” and “Iolink” went down before us. A fast train bore us back to Atlantic by supper-time, after which the ladies armed themselves *cap-à-pie* for a midnight bouse with the waves, Miss Rachel with a smelling-bottle, Miss Sallie with some pages of music, Ernestine with a volume of poetical quotations, and all of them with wraps suitable to a September southeaster. The night was as yet lit up only by the stars; the wind had hauled to the “suthard” and was but a point or two forward of abeam, as under easy sail we held our course due east, which in the face of a gray silver sky announced the appearance of a full rounded moon. Astern of us the long line of Atlantic beach was illuminated with myriads of twinkling lights, while the brilliant rays from the tall tower—not yet subdued by the moon—were shooting out far and wide over the white-crested sea. Strains of music from widely separate points, with

innumerable sounds of mirth and revelry, grew faint and fainter as we ploughed our way through lively-running seas, that every now and then, it seemed for spite, would, surging, dash over the forward quarter and break in a shower of spray.

The ladies, all of whom were imperfectly sheltered in the cockpit, had still, on the advice of the captain, brought along with them their gossamer covering. Not the least alarmed, but rather animated by the inspiring influence of a ten-knot breeze and the great beauty of the surrounding scene, they gave not a murmur or gesture that could have been the cause of the anxious expression on the face of Captain L., who was at the wheel instructing Miss Sallie how to handle the sensitive spokes. He was looking so uneasy that at last she was constrained to ask, "What can be the matter, captain, you look so concerned?"

He laughed, and it brought the color back to his face: "I'm not alarmed about anything, Miss Sallie," was the answer, "but am very uneasy about your mother and Miss Rachel, and I don't know who else, only it is not about you."

"You alarm me, anyhow. What is it?"

He laughed again: "What is it I should be scared about when you are not? Why, to explain, I am afraid with this sea running higher and higher that some of them will be touched with the *mal de mer*. Hold her due—hold her due—due east, Miss Sallie, if you please. There; keep her so. Please excuse me for a moment;" and he went forward to ask the opinion of "his man" if, to make it easier to the ladies, it would not be better to haul everything flat by the wind and meet the seas nearly head on. His answer was a broad grin, and "Not a durn bit, cap. If they're goin' to have it, they'll have it anyhow. Best thing to do is to set out sumthin' to eat,—not cake and lemonade, but bread and cheese and wine. Yes, I know you've eat a hearty supper,—all the better; but get 'em down and give 'em bread and cheese and wine, with some of your 'poltry' to give 'em an appetite to take it in. If you ain't got any fresh poltry on hand, why, interest them in sumthin' else,—a chart of the coast, the bag of colors, or sumthin' else. Anyhow, get 'em ballasted with bread and cheese and wine. I'll go take the wheel and ease her on as much as I can."

Mr. D. and the old gentleman were already below and busy talking over some business matters. At the captain's summons all came down, and, behold, the steward had spread before us a most inviting set-out of salad, cold tongue, sardines, and native wine in several varieties, and all these edibles and drinkables might be looked upon as specifics to fortify us against the "sickness of the sea."

"I feel dizzy now," said Miss Rachel. "Wine will make me feel dizzier."

"It's curious," said Mr. D., in rather a faint voice, "I feel queer myself, though I've crossed the ocean several times without a qualm."

Probably the countenances of some of the others expressed the same feeling that the words of these two conveyed. And it was splendidly *à propos* for these parties at this juncture that under the deft fingers of Miss Sallie the little cabinet organ swelled out with the strains of a lively sailor song:

"But the clouds disappearing, the prospect is clearing,
And Eolius sets all her prisoners free;
The heavens are brighter, the seaman's heart lighter and lighter,
For 'tis land that we see, 'tis land that we see."

"It don't seem to me we'll see any more land to-night," was the rather morose remark of Mr. D.

"I wish we were bound for Bombay," said Miss Sallie, running her fingers over the keys.

"Bombay puts me in mind of it," said Captain L., "if you can put up with an original song, and Miss Sallie can improvise an accompaniment. I must ask that there be among you some charity, as we've been so long together."

"Go ahead, captain. I'll do my best," said Sallie.

"Do sing us a song of your own," Miss Rachel out of her reviving spirits exclaimed.

"I'll try," said the captain. "The first verse I'll sing, Miss Sallie, without your aid, to give you a cue.

"It was while cruising on the upper Chesapeake that one winter night these lines occurred to me, and I am imbued with them yet." And then he commenced in a fine barytone, tuned up with the influences of the exhilarating surroundings, a song in which he tenderly celebrated the search for a home and a wife.

There was considerable pause after the captain had finished, broken by Mr. D.: "You then, too, are in search of a home, captain?"

"I wish I were; but I must first get the companion with which to make it happy."

"I shouldn't think it would be so hard for you to find one," said Miss Rachel.

"Perhaps not,—but desperately hard to secure."

We were all startled at this moment by a voice coming calling down the companion-way:

"Cap'n, there's a han'sum sight out at sea, if the ladies 'ud like to see it."

This summoned us all on deck. It was a coastwise steamer, very much illuminated, crossing our bow. The captain took the helm, and as we passed under the stern of the leviathan we rounded up in stays, the sheet-blocks creaked, the sails flapped and flopped, and gradually we squared away, homeward bound. Without the aid of music, four singers spontaneously united in that time-honored song of "Home, Sweet Home." Scudding away, with the sea surging aft, with the moon behind us illuming our way, it was not long before Atlantic's lights were in sight again.

Under the pilotage of "our man," we were soon safe within the Inlet, disembarked, and in the parlor of the hotel. Several of them tossed the balance of the night upon their beds more than they would have tossed if they had slept upon the waves, the reason for which was they had something anxious on their minds.

Neither did the next morning relieve them all. Anywise, it was in the early forenoon that Mr. D. sent up his card for Miss Sallie, with

the explanation he would like to see her before he was compelled to leave.

She received him in the private parlor of the suite. "Miss Sallie," he said, walking forward, hat in hand, "I am compelled to be in the city on business for a few days, and am very unsettled in my mind. As a business-man I bring things to conclusions as quick as possible. With regard to the proposition that I have made to you, may I say a few words? You are an element in my destiny beyond all the cool calculation that has hitherto directed it. My life is no longer a matter of the head, but of the heart. My fortune, all my feelings, my future destiny, my life, are at your feet. Will you accept of me, humble as I am?"

Her silence he considered as acquiescence, and extended his arm as if to embrace her. She moved backwards a step, and, standing beautifully erect, waved him off.

"I answered you once before," she said.

"But your answer was not final then."

"Then it is final now."

"Your father would have it otherwise."

"My father, who is an old friend of yours, might want it so, but my sister would not."

"Ha-a-a! Your sister!"

"My sister would have me marry only whom I loved. I like you!"

"Will your like ever turn into love?"

"I cannot tell," she said, bowing and moving away.

In the afternoon, all of our party took the train for Hammonton, that thriving centre of fruit-culture. Mr. D. had altered his mind about going back to town, and it was from him we had expressions of delight while we were inspecting not only the fruit,—apples, pears, peaches, plums,—but the trees in their thrifty growth. As Downing says, "This is the most perfect union of the useful and the beautiful that the earth knows."

"That pineapple," said Miss Sallie, "which is the principal ornament of our little greenhouse,"—she was speaking towards Mr. D.,—"has proved an astonishing success. It seemed to dwindle at first, but it has surmounted all difficulties and made itself at home."

It was this remark that sent the glow over the features of Mr. D., as, walking close beside her, he said, "Miss Sallie, whatever you see here to admire, please let me note it down, and we will send it to be planted in the garden of that new home."

"Really," she answered, "I don't think that fruits or flowers or anything else ought to intercept themselves between Erny and her lawyer-friend, except they came quite unconsciously. I never saw two people so wrapt up in one, ever before. I am going to advise them to give up the idea of home, which is becoming humdrum, and spend the winter in an Atlantic hotel."

"Atlantic!" the old gentleman exclaimed; "I have fallen in love with it myself. We read about the wonderful growth of cities in the West, but here right at our doors has sprung up a city in so short a

time, as if by the magic of genii under the influence of Aladdin's lamp. Thirty years ago it was but a barren beach; now it is a populous city, with broad avenues lined with elegant homes. You ask what is the practical influence that has occasioned this astonishing growth. Undoubtedly the situation is a primary cause. There is no other stretch of beach to equal it along the Atlantic coast; but the greatest of all other causes is rapid transit on a splendidly-equipped railroad. In eighty minutes we are whirled from Philadelphia to the sea, in elegant cars, with engines that burn only anthracite coal, which makes no smoke nor dust, and at a cost that is but small change in consideration of the trip."

The orchard we were in was laid out in a remarkably orderly and attractive manner. There were acres upon acres of the thrifty vines, and still other acres with pear-trees of the Bartlett, Duchess, and Seckel varieties. Still farther on, the peaches attracted our attention. As a curious problem, nine trees were planted so as to count ten rows, of three in each row. The geometrical figure was two isosceles triangles interjoined. Plums and apples were fully represented by the most hardy and luxuriant species. The same varieties of fruits are grown as in California, with the exception that in the latter State grapes are mostly of foreign varieties, while in Jersey natives have the preference. As every one is aware, blackberries and strawberries will well repay the labor expended upon them, and they are nowhere found raised with greater success than in New Jersey. Fine fruit as the flower of commodities certainly blooms and thrives around Hammonton, —possibly more so than at any other centre along the Atlantic seaboard.

In the evening we were all in Atlantic City again. Standing at the clerk's desk were Captain L., Mr. D., and the old gentleman, who was handed a telegram. As his face paled, on reading its half-score of significant words, he almost reeled into the arms of the captain, who, nearest by, had raised them to support him.

"What is it, sir?" was the serious query.

"Is any one ill?" asked Mr. D., stepping close up.

But there was not a word of answer. The telegram had fallen from the trembling hand, and Mr. D., who quickly picked it up, was about to read it.

"One moment," remarked the captain, as he quietly took the paper, which he folded up and pushed into the vest-pocket of the still dazed man.

L. was still supporting him, and repeatedly asked, "What is the matter, sir?—what is the matter?"

The lips of the old gentleman slowly moved, though his head had fallen on his breast, as almost unconsciously he muttered, "I'm a ruined man,—a ruined man. Please send for H." It took two to take him to his room, and some time for the writer to see him there and talk matters over to the end, after which it was necessary to explain to the others this sudden stroke.

The simple-hearted Madam was true to her duty of gentle attention. The why and the wherefore of so sudden a blow, as the one which brings a family, used to a luxurious life, from affluence to poverty, she

did not ask,—a blow which proves most serious to those in the full vigor of life, but which without great patience is almost fatal to the aged.

Could it be doubted that Ernestine was able to soften this hard exigency of fortune, with the soft touch of not only her hand, but the sympathy of a heart that was loyal in its depths to any extent?

It was the high courage of Sallie that possibly had the most inspiring influence of all in encouraging both father, mother, and sister to look the situation calmly in the full front of its effect.

It was Mr. D. who, as the practical man, was inquisitive to learn the full extent of the calamity,—so much so as to wish to know if the daughters had nothing on their own account. Captain L. was anxious to know if the old gentleman would not find it a relief to be aboard the yacht; and on the persuasion of Sallie he considered it would be well. And so upon a Saturday night we boarded the *Minerva*, with the exception of Mr. D., who found it suddenly necessary to be in town. We made sail under the starlight, and stood along the coast to the southward for the Delaware capes.

Sunday morning broke beautiful over the sea at almost a calm; and, as it remained calm through the day, an awning was spread over the afterpart of the vessel, and in the forenoon we held services on deck; in the afternoon the organ was brought up, and we sang, to the great comfort of our patient, "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," and as it rang out in a good quartette over the waters, the sea-gulls lazily flopped near by, as if to gain new vigor in their course under the inspiring strain. It was with the shining of the stars that the breeze sprang up again, with Sallie at the helm and the captain in command.

The light sails were set, and under a full press of canvas we went coursing over the seas a point or two free.

"Do you remember my song of the other night?" the captain asked, in a very serious tone.

"I do," was the monosyllabic answer.

"Will you be that friend of mine, the mate of this vessel,—my mate through this life, and my mate, I hope, forever?"

Her only answer was that for an instant the sheets slacked and the canvas shivered in the wind.

"If you will, we will choose a spot as well as those others for a home."

She said not a word, but the helm went up until the sails were crowded full again; and as he gazed at her in erect and stately beauty, he merely murmured,—

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of Southern climes and starry skies,
While all that's best of dark and bright
Are in her aspect and her eyes,
Mellowing thus that tender light
That Heaven to gaudy day denies."

"Sallie," he said, softly, "I love you, and you know it. No sudden stroke of misfortune could separate my love from you. Will you be mine forever?"

She took her hand from the helm, pressing her waist against it, and he took it in his own as gently he repeated,—

"I know two hearts whose movements thrill
In unison so closely sweet
That they must heave responsive still,
Or parting cease to beat."

It was at this moment that the writer came on deck, and, entering into the scene, made solemnly this remark :

"We will have a double wedding when we get in port."

G. S. B.

TOO LATE.

LONG time with patient toil he wrought
In duty's tread-mill road,
The while within his secret thought
A shape of beauty glowed.

He found it in the evening skies,
In moments snatched alone,
When, from the clouds, mysterious eyes
Looked rapture to his own.

And, as the seasons waxed and waned,
Filled with laborious days,
Within the marble block enchained
He saw his thought always.

He saw, in white perfection turned,
Each fair and rounded limb,
As though th' imprisoned statue yearned
Itself to come to him.

Yet still his chisel idle lay,
And when his heart complained,
He answered, "There will come a day—
By patience all is gained."

It comes. The tasks by duty set
Are ended faithfully;
With throbbing heart he turns to let
His long-loved vision free,

Lost is the cunning of his hands;
His dream of years has flown;
And in the dusk of age he stands
Mocked with the empty stone.

M. M.

AT LAST:

SIX DAYS IN THE LIFE OF AN EX-TEACHER.

THIRD DAY.—WET-WEATHER WISDOM.

THE third day of my visit to the country was such as people starting for a vacation seldom count upon. There was rain; not a mere shower, to make earth and sky brighter, but an alternation of mist and rain, rain and mist, that compelled me to remain in-doors. Even a walk on the broad piazza was uncomfortable, so penetrating was the dampness. I tried to ignore the weather and lose myself in a book, but the weather declined to be ignored; it made its depressing influence known, in ways which weather well understands, and I finally found myself compelled to stop reading, and study the pictures on the wall of the parlor. They were about as dreadful as the day: so the weather, my surroundings, and my spirits were soon in close accord.

My hostesses were quite sorry for me; besides, they had in other years lost summer boarders through bad weather, and, as I was their only guest, thus far, of the season, they desired to retain me. One or the other contrived to be with me and endeavored to entertain me. Mistress Drusilla showed me all the family pictures, about half of them being faded photographs, and the remainder daguerrotypes, taken in the good old times when a sitter was expected to maintain an unchanged countenance for a quarter of an hour. Then Miss Dorcas brought down the "samplers" which had been worked by several generations of her feminine ancestors: some were alphabets worked in stitches that made the letters resemble tea-chest characters; others gave visible form to passages of Scripture; while one, which Miss Dorcas regarded as a masterpiece, was a genealogical tree of which each branch had its own distinctive color,—and all the colors had faded.

Then each sister told me stories about some of the neighbors' families, to the third and fourth generations; but they had told similar stories during several hours of each of the preceding days, and there are limits even to country gossip. Finally the old women seemed to feel doleful themselves, and Mistress Drusilla said,—

"If it weren't for fear of disturbing you, my dear, we should borrow little Alice, our special pet, for an hour or two, on days like this. She always wakes us up when things are forlorn like."

"Don't let yourselves suffer on my account, I beg," said I, languidly. "Little Alice, you said: I wonder if that is the child who has strayed up once or twice to the pines where I had my hammock?"

"The very same," said Miss Dorcas, eagerly. "I am sure it must be, for yesterday I saw the flutter of her dress through the trees, I'm sure."

"A child who owns a number of dolls with extraordinary names?" I continued.

"That's our Alice!" exclaimed Mistress Drusilla. "I hope she

didn't trouble you much? We haven't let her come to the house since you've been here, for fear of worrying you; but, my dear, we can't watch her closely enough to keep her entirely off the grounds."

"She's not at all offensive," said I. "Indeed, she is quite amusing in some ways. I'm not a child-hater, I beg you to understand: I'm merely endeavoring, for the present, to be spared the wearing influence of children."

"Then you wouldn't be annoyed if we were to have her here a little while this morning?" asked Miss Dorcas. "We were planning to take turns in going over to see her and her grandmother this morning, but the air is so savage to old bones. And we could get the grocer, when he comes, to bring Alice over in his wagon. We'll keep her in the kitchen with us, and she isn't a noisy child, so she wouldn't disturb you if you were in the parlor here or your room."

"Have her wherever you like, or wherever she likes most to be," said I. "I assure you she won't trouble me in the least. I am quite willing to take an interest in this particular child, just to prove to you that I'm not a follower of wicked old King Herod. But no other children, please, nor any more of Alice's family, for me."

"You are very good, my dear," said Mistress Drusilla, looking positively radiant. "Miss Dorcas, you keep a sharp watch for the grocer, won't you, while I write the child's grandma a note."

"I'll be sure to catch him," said Miss Dorcas, who in an instant was in the hall, and arraying herself in rubber shoes and water-proof cloak, while I felt my cheeks blushing with pride—and shame—at my success in securing an enlivening influence for the day, and the deceitful spirit I had manifested. Miss Dorcas hurried to the road, almost a quarter of a mile from the house, and came back in half an hour, looking like a person who had been under Niagara, but saying, with a cheery chirp in her voice,—

"He'll get her."

I wandered to my room, and resumed the oft-broken thread of the novel which I had begun to read days before. I read long enough to become deeply interested, but suddenly I was recalled to a sense of things about me by a series of slams of the outer door, a succession of audible kisses, and then a loud shout:

"Dere's dem banisters! Dey must have been awful lonesome for free or four days wiff nobody to slide down 'em. Now for it! Hooray!"

I dropped my book, went to the door, stopped, recovered myself, and returned to my book. It never would do to have those old women see me greet the child effusively, as I was inclined to do. Within an hour, in spite of the rain, they would have told all their neighbors, with "corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to a bald and unconvincing narrative," as the Mikado says in Gilbert's Japanese play, of how their child-hating boarder had changed her nature within three days. When finally I appeared at the head of the stairs, I was as dignified and non-committal as if I were at the desk of my school-room in the city.

"Hello!" shouted little Alice, as she almost made my heart stop

beating by the speed with which she slid down the stair-rail, while Mistress Drusilla and her sister looked on admiringly from below. "Just ain't dis fun! Goodness! Gracious!"

"Alice, dear," I whispered, as she hurried up the stairs and again bestrode the rail, "do be careful. I'm afraid you'll lose your hold and fall,—perhaps kill yourself."

"Nonsense!" she shouted. "I ain't de kind dat kills as easy as dat. Here I go!—one—two—free!" And before I could remonstrate further she was again on the floor at the foot of the stairs, and the two old women were all smiles, as if the child were their own and her rude exploit were a lesson well learned.

"Bet you can't do it," said the child, as she again hurried to the head of the stairs. "Don't you ever teach your school-children dat? Dey'd like you ever so much if you would."

I did not doubt it, though I did not say so. The child continued,—

"Best way to teach 'em is to learn how yourse'f. My fahver says dat's de only way to teach anybody anyfin'."

"Do be careful, child," said I, ignoring personal allusions, and slipping behind her, for she was again astride the rail. "Hold tighter, if you want to be safe."

"How does you know about it if you hasn't done it?" said she, looking around at me sharply. "Has you ever slid down banisters?"

"Never;—never in my life."

"Well, dese is splendid ones to learn on. Dere ain't no turns in 'em, an' dere ain't no big roun' knob at de bottom, eiver. Just let me teach you. You frow one foot over,—so—" here she actually lifted my left foot across that rail, which caused me instinctively to fall forward and clutch tightly with both hands, to save myself from falling.

"Don't hold so tight," said she, "or you can't slide. Put your hands dis way,—see?" Then she tugged at my hands with her own little fingers.

I still clung to the rail with my hands and endeavored to get off, but the little fingers were very strong, the rail was painfully smooth and too thick to grasp tightly; in an instant my grasp relaxed a little, and I slid swiftly downward, my feet finally striking the floor with a vigorous thump. I looked around quickly, as women seem possessed to do when they have done anything ridiculous; I thought I had heard a titter, but there stood the two old women, looking as demure as Quakers at meeting on Lord's day. Not so little Alice: she stood at the head of the stairs, and clapped her pudgy hands vigorously, shouted "Hooray!" laughed, and finally said,—

"I knew you could do dat, if you'd only try. I'll just tell my fahver next time he comes home dat I teached de teacher to slide down banisters just as good as I could."

"If you do, I'll never speak to you again as long as I live," said I.

"Don't do it, pet," said Mistress Drusilla, quickly. "Be a little lady."

"Isn't it bein' a lady to tell de solemn trufe?" asked the child.

"Yes, darling," said Miss Dorcas, hastening to caress the child, "but the truth isn't to be told at all times."

"De times you can't tell it," said the child, who seemed half in a revery and half in a pout, "'pears to me is when you want to do it most."

"Precisely so," said I. "The times little girls most want to tell the truth are those in which they shouldn't."

"Let's do somefin' else," suggested Alice, emerging from revery and pout. "'Tain't no good to go on talkin' to me 'bout de trufe, when I don't know what in de world you mean. I'll tell you what we can do; slide down some more, and you go first, so I can see if you do it right."

"I decline—emphatically."

"Mercy, what a big word! Say, Missis Drusilla, what's you goin' to have for dinner? I smells it a-cookin', and I's dreadful hungry."

"We are going to have boiled chicken and dumplings, pet, but they won't be done in a long time. It isn't eleven o'clock yet. It takes a long time to cook a dinner, pet."

"Well, I's firsty, anyway. Drinkin'-water don't have to be cooked."

A glass of water was brought, and the child drank like a heated horse. I would have been frightened, had I not remembered similar performances of children in my class-room in the city, and if Miss Dorcas had not whispered to me,—

"She's everlastingly being taken that way, dear."

Then little Alice resumed her sliding, but soon she tired of it, and longed for something new. I was heartily sorry for her, for I knew well the discomforts of imprisonment by shower, so I said,—

"Isn't it too bad, dear, that it rained so hard?"

The child turned to me with a reproving look, and replied,—

"Course it ain't. If 'twas too bad, honest and true, de Lord wouldn't let it rain: don't you know dat yet? Don't you know dat verse in de Bible,—'I will give you de rain of your land in his due season'? dat means He sends it just when it ought to come. If it don't come 'xcept when de Lord sends it,—an' I'd like to know how it can come any uvver way,—den what makes it too bad? I guess you ain't been teach'd very good 'bout some of dem fings, else you wouldn't say noffin' like dat."

"I suppose you are right, dear; it isn't too bad that the rain has fallen; but I wish for your sake that there was something pleasant for you to do."

"Does you? Well, den you fink up somefin': dat's de way my fahver does, an' he keeps on finkin' till he finds it."

"H'm!" said I, as I began to cudgel my wits for some way of amusing the child.

"Anyfin' dat does for de children in your school 'll do for me, I guess. I ain't very hard to suit," said Alice, by way of encouragement.

"I'm afraid that wouldn't suit you, for I don't have any amusements in my school: the children come there only to study."

"What! All dem poor children you tole me 'bout?"

"Yes."

"An you's so sorry for 'em, an' yet you don't do noffin' to 'muse 'em? Well, if I ever!"

Mistress Drusilla and Miss Dorcas joined the child in looking inquiringly at me, at which I felt indignant. Was it not enough that I gave six or seven hours a day to my juvenile charges, wearing myself out for them, that I should be held to account for not doing more? Besides, even if I were inclined to devise amusements for them there was no time allotted to such diversions by the officials who prepared the routine of study.

"I couldn't amuse my pupils if I would," said I. "I merely do as I am ordered by the school board, who don't provide amusements."

"How different from the days when we were young!" said Miss Dorcas to Mistress Drusilla. "Don't you remember how the teacher used to come out in the yard at recess and play tag with us, and hopscotch, and how when it rained she would get up a game of 'Button, button,' in the school-room?"

"Indeed, yes," responded Mistress Drusilla, "and how when the teacher was a young man he played marbles and leap-frog with the boys."

"Well," said little Alice, "we's wastin' lots of time, an' not doin' noffin'. Let's play grasshopper. I'll show you how, if you don't know."

A single illustration, given with great vigor, caused all the adults to decline.

"Then let's play cookin'-school; you an' Missis Drusilla an' Miss Dorcas make cakes an' pies an' fings, an' I help you eat 'em. You needn't be 'fraid of makin' too many."

"Pet," said Mistress Drusilla, "the stove is pretty well covered with things being fixed for dinner, so we can't play cooking-school very well. Suppose we tell stories until we can think of something better. I don't believe Miss Brown has ever heard the story of——"

"Miss Brown!" exclaimed the child, looking at me gravely. "I wish you had a nicer name."

"I am satisfied with it," said I. "I am sorry it does not please you, but I assure you I didn't select it for myself."

"I named one of my dollies Miss Brown one time," said Alice, "an' my fahver wouldn't let me call her dat. He said——"

"You shouldn't interrupt, darling," said Miss Dorcas, gently. "Mistress Drusilla was saying something to you."

"I was only saying," resumed Mistress Drusilla, "that I didn't believe our friend had ever heard your story of the big rain."

"I don't believe I have," said I, anxious to divert the conversation from my name, of which I always felt I had reason to be proud. I certainly did not propose to defend it against any fancies or dislikes of this child's peculiar father.

"All right: I'll tell it to her," said little Alice; "but I fought everybody had heard dat story. Well, once dere was an awful big rain-storm. Folks knew it was comin', 'cause a smart man told 'em so, but dey didn't pay no 'tention to him. Dere was lots of fings goin' on dat suited 'em well enough, so dey didn't want to fink 'bout fings dat

didn't suit em, and, of course, nobody wanted any rain. Well, one man dat knew all 'bout it began to get ready for it; he made a great big boat for him an' his family an' all deir fings, so dere would be some place for him to go when it got too rainy on shore. 'Twas an awful big boat,—bigger'n a dozen houses in a row,—bigger'n almos' any of dese steamships dat come 'long de ocean in front of our house, my fahver says.

"He didn't have a boat just to go in an' swim away from de storm, eiver. He was de kind of a man who had finked 'bout somefin' for children to do on rainy days, so he fixed up a whole lot of de boat so he could carry some animals too, 'cause all children likes animals. Dere was places for cows, so de children could have all de milk dey wanted to drink, when uvver folkaes' children didn't have any 'cause de rain got so bad dat it spoiled de roads an' washed away de bridges, so de milk-man didn't come. An' dere was places for dogs, 'cause my fahver says no man dat's got a heart is goin' to be happy in-doors in a big storm if he knows his dog is out in de wet. Dere was places for kitties, too—Say, has you got a cat? I have; I got two of 'em. Just you come over to my house, an'——"

"Never mind the kitties now, pet," suggested Mistress Drusilla. "Go on with the story."

"Oh! Well, my kitties is nice, anyway. Well, de man what finked 'bout de storm fixed places for donkeys, too, an' my fahver says he shouldn't wonder if dere was a nice long clear place in de ark—dat was de name of de boat—where de children could ride de donkeys once in a while durin' de day when dey didn't know what else to do while it was rainin'. But he had lots of uvver animals, too; why, do you know, dat man finked so much 'bout what his little children would like dat he took a whole menagerie in dat boat,—elephants, an' lions, an' bears, an' giraffes, an' all de kinds of animals dat's in de picture-books. He took lots of birds, too; chickens, so de family could have plenty of eggs to eat, an' larks to sing so's to wake de folkses up in de mornin', an' sparrows to go chirpin' roun', and geese to drop quills for de children to make squakers out of, an' monkeys dat would cut up an' make de children laugh. Oh, I just tell you what, 'twas nicer dan any Sunday-school picnic-boat you ever saw in your life. He took some uvver fings dat I don't fink was very nice,—snakes, an' skeeters, an' flies, an' bedbugs——"

"Pet!" exclaimed Mistress Drusilla, reprovingly.

"Darling!" ejaculated Miss Dorcas.

"Well," said the child, "'twasn't my fault; I didn't tell him to take 'em. My fahver says he s'poses Mr. Noah had to do it, else his family wouldn't have noffin' to grumble 'bout, an' folks dat haven't got noffin' else to grumble 'bout goes to work to find fault wiff each uvver. So when Noah got all de animals aboard, an' asked all his friends if dey didn't want to go too, an' dey said dey guessed not, it begun to look cloudy: so he ran down to de store to get de last fings dat had been forgot, and when he got back he shut de door of de ark, an' de rain began.

"Gracious! Dat *was* a rain! My fahver says he can't see why

people tell lies 'bout big rain-storms, when once dere was a real rain so much bigger dan anybody can make believe about. It filled up de roads so folks couldn't change deir minds an' go down to de ark if dey wanted to. No matter how tight folks shutted deir doors an' windows, de rain got in de houses, and wouldn't go out again. It kept on goin' in till fires in de stoves was putted out by it, so dey couldn't cook no breakfasts. Den folks had to go up-stairs to keep from gettin' deir feet wet, an' finely dey had to get in de attics an' on de roofs, an' den dere wasn't no place else to go, so dey just had to be drowned. To fink of all de little boys an' girls in de world bein' drowned 'xcept just a few dat was on a big boat! I fink 'twas perfect'ly awful; but my fahver says 'twas de best fink dat could have happened to 'em, for de world in dem days wasn't a very good place for children to grow up in; 'most all dat men an' boys did was to fight an' get killed, an' de women an' girls had to cry lots 'bout it. But all de time of dat big rain dere wasn't nobody drowned on board de ark, an' dere wasn't no trouble dere, 'xcept p'raps it wasn't always easy to open de windows an' air de rooms when de rain was comin' down so hard. But de folks was all right; an' you know why? 'Cause dey'd finked before-hand 'bout what to do if a big rain came."

While this recital had been going on, Mistress Drusilla and Miss Dorcas nodded and smiled at each other as happily as if little Alice had been their own; they were erect and grave in an instant whenever the child's eyes wandered towards either of them, for they seemed possessed of the old-fashioned notion that a child, no matter how tenderly loved, should never be praised for any of its smart deeds or sayings, lest it should become vain. Consequently, many were the beaming smiles that were ruthlessly ruined during that ten-minutes moral discourse on the weather. As soon as it ended, however, the old sisters looked at me with the utmost pride and triumph, and seemed rather surprised and pained that I did not indulge in some startling demonstration of approval. Miss Dorcas, as I afterwards learned, was really pained at my apparent apathy; but the truth was that I was unaccustomed to the moral just drawn from the well-known story. As Miss Dorcas turned aside and led the child to the door to look at the rain, I found Mistress Drusilla regarding me with an air of solicitude and perplexity; then she said, in a low tone and hurriedly,—

"I hope, my dear, it didn't seem unorthodox to you? Our minister has heard it, and I do assure you that he didn't seem to see any harm in it."

As for the little relator, she looked through the big hall window as if in search of another moral in the rain, still heavily falling, but presently she said, in an absent-minded manner, as if talking to herself,—

"I would like to know why tellin' stories always makes me so dreadful hungry."

Then the old women smiled at each other, and Mistress Drusilla went to a jar in the dining-room and returned with a large piece of cake, and Miss Dorcas went to the cellar and got a goblet of milk, and the child accepted both with as much affectation of surprise as if she

were an accomplished actress. After the refreshments were disposed of, the youngster turned to me and said,—

"Has you fought of somefin' yet?"

"Thought of something?"

"Yes; somefin' to do, you know,—somefin' to do in-doors, 'cause it's rainin' out-doors an' we can't go ramblin' around."

"Don't you do anything but ramble around, child, when the weather is pleasant?"

"No," said the child, with entire self-satisfaction. "My fahver says dat's de best way for me to learn somefin'. I go all 'bout de neighborhood an' see ev'ryfin' I can, an' den I go home an' ask gran'ma or my fahver all 'bout 'em; dat takes lots of time, you know. Mos' generally it's gran'ma I have to ask, 'cause my fahver ain't home——"

"Isn't home, you should say, my child," said I. The force of habit is strong, and I had not been a teacher, correcting bad grammar for years, for nothing.

"What did I say?" asked she, her eyes opening wonderingly.

"You said 'ain't,'" I replied, "which was very awkward. "'Ain't' means 'am not;' you wouldn't say 'my father am not at home,' would you?"

"Of course not," was the reply, made with a most contemptuous look, "'cause why, it would sound awful pokey."

"I don't know what 'pokey' means," said I, "but you probably mean you would not say it because it would be ungrammatical. Well——"

"Ungarmatical!" she interrupted. "I 'member dat big word, 'cause one of our neighbors said it a lot of times one day when he was talkin' to my fahver 'bout de mornin' prayer,—you know de mornin' prayer, I hope,—de one dat begins 'Our Fahver'?"

"Certainly."

"Well, one of our neighbors made fun of it one day, 'cause he said 'Our Fahver *which* art in heaven' was ungarmatical, an' he said he didn't see how folks dat knew anyfin' could say a prayer in dat ungarmatical way. My fahver finked a little while, an' den he frowed away his cigar so hard dat it made my kitty jump out of de window. Den he said if all folks was so particular, he guessed prayin' wouldn't ever do 'em any good. Isn't it just awful to fink of folks bein' so particular 'bout little bits of fings? Dear me!"

The last two words were uttered with so much feeling that I began to feel very uncomfortable; I would have felt worse had not my hostesses already busied themselves about something else, Miss Dorcas having begun to study the weather, and Mistress Drusilla having suddenly discovered that an old-fashioned, mirror-fronted cloak-closet in the hall required dusting. Nevertheless, I ventured upon no more grammatical corrections. Had I chosen to, there would not have been opportunity, for the child quickly continued:

"Haven't you fought of somefin' yet? 'Cause, if you haven't, I have. Let's play school."

At last the good seed I had sown in fear and trembling was to bear fruit.

"Let's play school," the child continued. "You an' de two missesses be scholars, an' I'll be de teacher."

"What's that, pet?" asked Mistress Drusilla, clasping her dust-cloth in both hands, her eyes beaming encouragingly through her well-polished glasses.

"What did you say, dear?" asked Miss Dorcas, suddenly turning from the window and ignoring meteorological phenomena.

"I said let's play school, and I'll be de teacher. I'll fix fings. Just wait a minute."

While the two old women smiled at each other in expectant ecstasy, little Alice dragged from the dining-room, one after another, three large old-fashioned chairs, which she placed in a row near the large window in the hall. Then she brought out a high chair (which afterwards I learned had been purchased especially for her accommodation) and placed it in front of the pupils.

"Miss Dorcas," said she, "I don't believe I can teach right 'less I have some spectacles. Will you please lend me yours?"

"Gracious, child!" said the old lady, as she removed her glasses, yet hesitated to relinquish them, "you won't be able to see a thing with these specs."

"Dat don't matter," said the child, taking the glasses and putting them over her little nose and ears: "gran'ma says de teacher dat sees least generally gets along best. Say,"—this remark was addressed to me,—“you always wear spectacles when you teach de children, don't you?"

My only answer was an indignant look. Frank Wayne had often said, five years before, that my eyes were the most perfect in the world. I was sure they had not changed in any way since that time. Then the child climbed into her high chair and continued:

"I guess we won't have any roll-call, 'cause I know you's all here. We won't have any Bible-readin', eiver, 'cause de teacher can't read; but dat don't make no diff'rence; dat's what my fahver says."

So saying, the pretended teacher opened a book,—it was "Morning and Night Watches," which had lain on the window-ledge in the hall,—and said,—

"The school will come to 'tention. Class in 'rithmetic, stand up."

The two old women giggled, winked at me, and arose.

"The new girl, from New York, is in dat class," said the little teacher. "Why don't she get up, too?"

All this was very silly, but there was no one to see, as Frank Wayne once said when I became indignant at him for taking the unpardonable liberty of kissing me; so I arose, trying to discourage the teacher with a freezing look.

"Now," said Miss Alice, "dere ain't any slate or blackboard, so I'll give you some sums dat you can do wivout. If some folks bring a little girl some candies on a rainy day, an' den help her eat 'em, how many is de little girl goin' to get for herself?"

The only audible answer was a chuckle from Mistress Drusilla, who nudged me with her elbow.

"Never mind," said the teacher, after looking at each of us in-

quiringly. "You can bring de answer in de mornin'. I guess I'll call de joggrify-class. Now: if de world is round, just like an orange, how's we to learn just how it looks unless we's got some oranges here?"

"The grocer is going to bring some this afternoon, dear," said Miss Dorcas.

"We'll put off de joggrify-lesson till den, I guess," said the teacher, "an' call dis de readin'-class. De scholar dat's named Brown will read a story; an' it mustn't be a stupid one, neiver."

Then Mistress Drusilla nudged me again, and I replied, with some effort,—

"I haven't any story-book to read from."

"Den make believe you's got one," said Alice.

I tried to recall a story, and failed, as most people do when suddenly called upon. The teacher spared me by saying,—

"Next."

Mistress Drusilla did not respond, and I was tempted to return one of her familiar nudges, but it seemed undignified.

"Next," repeated the small figure in the high chair, throwing back her head and dropping her lower jaw like spectacted people in general. Miss Dorcas imitated a child's voice as closely as she could, and replied,—

"If you please, teacher, I haven't learned my lesson. I'm very sorry."

"So am I," said the little creature, gravely. "I don't see but I's got to read it myself. Well——" Here she opened her book and looked into it, turned the leaves forward and backward, cleared her throat, and finally began:

"Once dere was a time when dere wasn't any rain in a country dat's a long way off, an' ev'rybody in dat country came to have lots of trouble to get anyfin' to eat, 'cause noffin' could grow in de gardens an' on de farms, 'cause dere wasn't any water to make 'em grow. An' dere was a good man named 'Lijah dat didn't have noffin' to eat 'xcept what birds brought him, an' I guess de birds didn't have noffin' to bring him after a while, 'cause one day he went to a woman's house an' begged for somefin' to eat. De poor woman didn't have noffin' but a little flour an' some oil: dat's what dey use over dere instead of butter an' meat. An' 'Lijah told her dat if she'd make some biscuit and give him some she'd always find meal in de barrel an' oil in de jar till de rain came again. An' it turned out just like he told her. Dat man 'Lijah was awful smart; he didn't care to do noffin' but what he fought de Lord wanted him to do; dat's de reason he was so awful smart, my fahver says.

"Well, dat 'Lijah,—he was de same man dat made a lot of stones burn up by askin' de Lord to let a lot of fire come down on 'em,—de day he got dat fire to come down, an' den made de people take all de bad preachers away an' kill 'em, dat same day 'Lijah began to fink 'twas 'bout time for a spell of wevver to come, now de country had got rid of its bad old preachers. So he told his servant to go tell de king dat dere was rain a-comin'. Dey was all out in de country, de king

bein' out ridin', an' de king had begun to believe dat 'Lijah knew what he was talkin' 'bout: so he got in his chariot,—de king was carriage-people, you know,—and whipped up de horses to hurry home. Dere was 'Lijah, dat had been doin' so much good, walkin' along de awful dusty road; but de king didn't ask him to jump in an' take a ride; he didn't fink of noffin' but himself. He was sure he was goin' to get what he wanted, so he didn't care noffin' more for de man what had done it for him, so he whipped up his horses an' left 'Lijah trottin' along in de dusty road. De king had good horses,—kings has de best of ev'ryfin', you know,—but first fink he knew, 'Lijah had run so fast dat he'd got to town first. De reason was dat folks who ain't got anybody but 'emselves to help 'em get out of de rain, or any uvver trouble, is pretty sure to have more 'go' to 'em dan uvver folks, like kings, dat has ev'ryfin' done for 'em."

"What makes you think so, dear?—teacher, I mean," asked Mistress Drusilla.

"Cause my fahver says so," replied the child.

"I do believe it's time for the dinner to be done: I'm afraid it's burning," said Miss Dorcas.

"School's out," said the teacher, moving rapidly towards the dining-room.

As for me, I was obliged to believe that the little teacher's father had a faculty for drawing practical lessons from everything.

John Habberton.

IMEROS.

MY heart a haunted manor is, where Time
Has fumbled noiselessly with mouldering hands;
At sunset ghosts troop out in sudden bands,
At noon 'tis vacant as a house of crime;

But when, unseen as sound, the night-winds climb
The higher keys with their unstilled demands,
It wakes to memories of other lands,
And thrills with echoes of enchanted rhyme.

Then, through the dreams and hopes of earlier years,
A fall of phantom footsteps on the stair
Approaches near, and ever nearer yet,
A voice rings through my life's deserted ways:
I turn to greet thee, Love. The empty air
Holds but the spectre of my own regret.

Edgar Saltus.

TRUST AND TITLE-INSURANCE COMPANIES.

SOME years ago, before the invention of trust companies, an ignorant colored man arrived in one of the Northern cities. Illiterate and unskilled in knowledge of business, he yet possessed extraordinary shrewdness. Attaching himself in a humble capacity to one of the foremost financiers of the day, he displayed not only great faithfulness to his master, but also an unsuspected aptitude in imitating his money-getting schemes. Finally, having advanced in years, and wishing to secure for his growing family the advantages of education, which he had not himself enjoyed, but the value of which he had learned to appreciate and which his considerable fortune would give them, he made a will and died. In making the will he created a trust for the support of his widow, the careful education of each child, and a final distribution of the principal upon the last child's becoming of age. He naturally selected his patron and master for one trustee, and, for the other, a man who had for a long time acted as his scrivener and amanuensis. The financier, preoccupied with more momentous affairs, allowed the scrivener to be the active trustee. The widow, even more unused to business than her late consort, from time to time drew small sums for her immediate wants, but exercised no supervision over the disposition of the capital of the estate. No account was filed for years; but when at last, through the pressure of some more sophisticated friends, an account was forced, it was found that the trustee who had financial resources had not taken the time or trouble to guard the accumulations which had cost a life's labor and which constituted a parent's hope and provision for his children; while the other trustee, who had had the time to mismanage, had not the financial ability to make restitution. By technicalities unnecessary to detail, the joint liability of the neglectful but wealthy trustee was evaded, and the next generation had to start life where the father had begun.

Such cases were formerly common enough, nor could the foresight of more intelligent testators insure that the trustees selected by them should be proof against the ordinary vicissitudes of life, of fortune, of temptation to laxity, or worse.

The invention of trust companies was undoubtedly a great advance upon the old methods. Such corporations live forever. Their chief function being to manage estates, they do as a business what a private trustee does as a favor, or at best as an adjunct to his regular pursuits. They have also, as a rule, far greater and more permanent assets than an individual.

The plan is so excellent and so simple that, like most useful inventions, the wonder is that it was not thought of before. In a modified shape, indeed, corporations have from time immemorial been trustees of funds for public purposes. But it is curious that the existence of the universities, hospitals, churches, and municipal corporations, having for centuries been trustees of funds for public charities, did not long

before suggest that similar corporations administering private trusts for a compensation would prove not only profitable ventures but popular blessings.

The modern trust companies are equipped to perform the most diverse functions. In the personal relations they become guardians of minors, insurers of the honesty of employees, and surety for persons in positions of trust. In the material relations they are made executors, trustees, assignees, stake-holders: they will do anything, from dismantling one's house, packing and storing one's valuables, overseeing the rearing of little children, or winding up the affairs of bankrupts, to acting as trustees of millions of bonds of land-companies, car-trusts, gas-works, oil-pipe, steamship, railroad, and telegraph lines.

They have attained their greatest success in Philadelphia, where they originated, and where their numbers have rapidly increased, until there are now a score in that city alone, and a large proportion of all the trusts are committed to the charge of these companies, which, greatly to their credit, show an unbroken record of fidelity, and have never met with any check to their prosperity. In New York there are some large concerns, known all over the country chiefly as the trustees of railroad mortgages; but it is strange that in none of the great cities, excepting the one first mentioned, is any considerable proportion of the private fiduciary business as yet transacted by corporations. In few cities is there even in existence a corporation for the purpose. It seems altogether probable that their numbers will rapidly increase within the next decade.

But no doubt there are some objectionable features in having for a trustee a corporation, which has neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be damned.

The successful management of property is attained only by the utmost vigilance and industry. Like all kinds of success, it requires personal supervision and that sort of care which causes a man to reflect by day and by night over his own affairs,—to sift to the bottom every opportunity which looks fair, to avoid difficulties with infinite pains, to plan and execute, to investigate and forbear. The officers of a trust company, as compared with an individual dealing with his own, unquestionably perform their duties in a more or less perfunctory way. They could not carry about with them and take home o' nights all the detailed possibilities of improvement and dangers to every interest of the numerous estates in their charge. They are too apt, in order to escape criticism or liability, to invest and manage estates in a manner which, while it is conservatively safe, is exceedingly hard upon the beneficiaries requiring for immediate wants all the increment a property can earn. And the result, as a rule, is that the income derived from property so managed is considerably lower in its percentage than that yielded by estates in the hands of capable private trustees.

A good compromise disposition of property is to make a trust company and an individual trustees together. The working result is usually excellent. The individual supplies the careful thought about details and the energy in procuring investments, while the corporation furnishes the element of permanency and security,—thus uniting the

advantages of both plans. Some trust companies will not accept these joint trusts, but most will do so, particularly if it is arranged that the corporation shall have the actual custody of funds and muniments of title.

Of course such a profitable and attractive business is in danger of being overdone, and, in localities where the pioneers have proved successful, numerous rivals are springing up. Not all of these are strong in financial standing or experienced management. They may be started upon too little capital and by persons who do not possess the necessary qualifications, but who desire salaried berths for themselves. A check upon this evil is the examination of their affairs by the courts. All trust companies have frequent contact with the courts, which often select them to manage estates, and which always pass upon their stewardship. This fact furnishes a sufficient excuse for the appointment by them, at intervals, of persons to examine and report the condition of the various institutions. And it is a notable fact that wherever there has been this scrutiny it has revealed capable management accompanied by prosperity.

Perhaps the most ingenious and, upon the whole, to the public, the most valuable development of the trust company idea is the insuring of titles to real estate. Every one knows that, for generations, the purchaser of real property has had to be on his guard against flaws in the title, and that the only method of procuring comparative security has been to have the various transfers of the property, from the earliest known grant, noted chronologically on what is called a "brief" or "abstract" of title. This brief is submitted to counsel, whose opinion as to the validity of the several transfers is the purchaser's sole reliance. There are some important facts which may not appear upon a brief,—such, for example, as whether a prior owner was married or single at the time of his conveyance. If married, a wife's dower interest may crop out years after against the property in the hands of an innocent subsequent purchaser. In all the middle Western States the abstractor guards against this particular danger, in a measure, by introducing in the brief an affidavit of some one who knew whether the former owner was married or not at the time of the conveyance. But it is strange that even this device is almost invariably neglected or unknown to the practice of the Eastern States. Then, too, many a title can only be studied by the light of elaborate pedigrees, showing where the interest of each child of successive owners finally lodges. Aside from errors of fact, of which the above are but instances, the possibilities of mistakes of law in the opinion are infinite. There are questions of law which are pure matters of opinion, having never been decided; or of mere guess-work as to which of opposing lines of reasoning will ultimately prevail,—and the Supreme Court has the last guess.

A gentleman recently bought a point of land on the New England coast. His title, which was passed upon by competent counsel, was simple,—but two or three transfers from the original grantee. After building a villa on the site, he was astonished one day to have the United States government claim his land. It then transpired that there had anciently been a light-house on the point, which had been

razed to the ground and all traces of it obliterated. The government claimed title to the "appurtenances" of the former light-house, ten acres in extent. The occupation of the land by the last owners for more than twenty years, which would have conferred a good title if the adverse claimant had been an individual, has no force where it is a government claim, because of the legal maxim,—time does not run against the claim of the sovereign. This is an illustration of a flaw which escaped detection.

In certain parts of the far West, where land-speculation is too rampant to brook the delays of briefing and the examination of titles, thousands of dollars' worth of land pass from hand to hand upon what is called a "certificate," which is simply a memorandum by an abstractor—who may or may not be a lawyer—that he has examined the title and found it good. No details are given, and such memoranda are impossible of review. Such transactions will furnish litigation for a whole generation of lawyers when the population of the West becomes denser and land more scarce.

Most titles in the older portions of the country are well settled; but the chief events of life, several of which are inevitable events, affect them all. Birth, death, marriage, and insolvency all do so,—even though the owner has never executed a paper relating to his property,—and the consequences must be studied by subsequent purchasers.

Various methods of obviating these difficulties have been suggested or tried. In several of the Legislatures bills have been introduced, from time to time, having for their object the practical guaranteeing of titles by the State. One notable proposition was that all owners should deed their land to the State and receive in exchange a certificate of ownership or title, which, the enthusiastic advocates claimed, could be made negotiable like certificates of the stock of corporations, thus rendering transfers of real property as quick and convenient as of personalty. The natural outgrowth of this idea was, in imagination, a real estate exchange, with all the features of speculation—future deliveries, puts and calls, corners, and so forth—that are associated with property less stable than realty.

In some of the British Colonies—in parts of Australia and British America—a modification of this radical proposition has been put into actual effect. Laws have been passed the general plan of which is as follows: any two persons desiring to transfer land from one to the other may, for a trifling charge, convey it through government with government's guarantee. That is to say, if Smith desires to convey to Jones, he conveys to government, and government conveys to Jones, guaranteeing to him a quiet title. It is further provided by law that when title has thus passed through government, any adverse claimant of the land cannot bring a suit for the property itself. The only course in such cases left open to any one claiming a prior interest in the land is to sue government for money damages. It should be understood that the law is not obligatory; persons may convey land in the old way: it is simply a method which may be adopted at the option of the parties, and is found to be such a convenience that it is in general use where the law is in force. The experiment is still too recent

to permit of any conclusions, but it is said that the small charge for guaranteeing is found to more than offset the losses; that the system actually pays a revenue to government, and is growing in popularity with the public.

In this country many of our most profitable semi-public undertakings, which in other countries are functions of government, are conducted by private corporations. Such was the beginning of our postal service, and such still are our gas-works, electric-light companies, railways, and notably our telegraph system. The Continental governments conduct nearly all these things themselves; their railways, public lighting, and even many matters which are in no sense public, are managed by government. In France even the sale of tobacco is a government monopoly. England pursues a course more like ours, with the important exception of the telegraph, which is a branch of the postal service.

But, ignoring the question whether the guaranteeing of land-titles should be a private or a public enterprise, it is one that is being introduced rapidly and with advantage by private corporations.

The scheme originated in Philadelphia, in 1876, where the success of the first company has led to the formation of others, till there are now no less than eight in that one city. They have also been established in New York, Chicago, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, San Francisco, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Portland, Denver, Omaha, Kansas City, Pittsburg, Jersey City, Newark, Rochester, and other places.

The true plan consists in procuring a "plant," which is a complete transcript of all existing records copied from the official records. The mass of material thus obtained is arranged by a simple method so as to be conveniently accessible by a locality-index. All the transfers constituting titles to what were once large farms are thus grouped, and the later transfers are differentiated, showing how they became divided into building-lots. Current transfers are noted as they take place. Such a plant is, of course, an elaborate and costly thing. Not only are these records voluminous for each property, but it is estimated that succeeding transfers cause them to double every ten years. When it is stated that the plant of a single company now completed and brought down to date contains more than four millions of separate and necessarily accurate descriptions of boundaries, some idea of the magnitude of the work may be gained. In a large city, a quarter of a million of dollars will perhaps hardly secure the plant necessary to begin business. This cost represents nothing but labor,—the laborious transcription of records.

Once provided with a plant, the business consists in examining and insuring titles. It is obvious that by this system an examination is much less tedious and more certain than when done by individual counsel. The titles to fifty neighboring lots, when traced back a few years, meet and unite in those of perhaps two large blocks of land, which, still further back, join in the title to one farm. A lawyer, to examine title to one lot, has, of course, to trace it back to the beginning. The examination of the title to the next lot, perhaps by a different individual, involves a repetition of the labor, which is identical from the

point at which the two titles join. A company, however, possessing a plant, has all the data accessible at a glance, or, at most, after having traced the title to one of the two lots it is feasible to use, without repeating the work, all the material relating to the common origin of the titles. Data, systematized, grouped by localities, and spread upon maps, enable the company at once to refer with almost faultless accuracy to every instrument of record affecting a particular property. By an ingenious organization, five clerks working independently must coincide in the same mistake to make the locality-index faulty. There is much less risk in such a method than in the old plan of examining indexes in the several public offices, in which wills, deeds, and judgments are often imperfectly recorded and are always arranged indiscriminately by names instead of by localities. The expense to the purchaser, too, by the new method is uniformly less than by the old.

Great as these advantages are, the chief one has as yet but been alluded to,—viz., the insurance feature. Not only does the company more thoroughly examine, but afterwards it insures the accuracy of its work by giving the purchaser a regular contract or policy, guaranteeing him the peaceable enjoyment of his property. Like all insurance, the value of this depends upon the strength of the company. A well-managed company is enabled to make handsome profits at low premiums, because in this form of insurance the risks are avoidable by care and system, while in all others they are not under human control, as, for example, in life, fire, marine, cyclone, and, in Italy, hail-storm insurance. These policies are easily transferable upon a re-sale of the property; all that is necessary is the mere examination of the last transfer. The sense of security enjoyed by an owner when he knows not only that his title has been thus passed upon by a system of almost mechanical accuracy, but also that he holds a responsible guarantee, is well worth the small cost to him.

Recently some companies have been started purporting to be genuine land-title insurance corporations, which are conducted upon a different and inferior plan. A number of real-estate lawyers join together in forming a company for insuring titles. No plant is made, but each member of the company examines titles for his clients as before, and upon his examination the company insures them. While this plan is superior to the old-fashioned mere examination by counsel, because there is an actual insurance, yet so far as the accuracy of the examination is concerned it possesses no features of advantage whatever. Then, too, this plan holds out an invitation to fraud which may be perpetrated at any time upon such a scale as to cripple or ruin the company and render its policies worthless. It is a fatal defect that the corporate guarantee is given upon the work of the individual member, so that he can, even though doing the work dishonestly, procure the company's insurance, thus conferring on his fraudulent examination a commercial value. One dishonest member, by passing a few worthless titles to a confederate, with the corporation's insurance, could wreck the company.

In cities where there are title-insurance companies, it has been found that one or two plants suffice for all. Those possessing no plant simply reinsure their risks. This leads the mind to speculate whether a union

of the several plants and a concentration of capital in the perfecting of one combined plant, accessible to all, may not eventually be found to be the greatest economy of labor and expense.

The companies doing exclusively trust business and also the title-insurance companies at first encounter opposition from the bar wherever they are introduced. There can be no doubt that particular professional men, whose business has run in grooves which will be invaded, must suffer. Yet it is a question whether these companies, like any other labor-saving contrivance, do not, in the long run, prove advantageous, even to those at first adversely affected. So far as the simple trust business is concerned, lawyers, when serving as executors, trustees, etc., are, for the time being, not acting as lawyers. If they have served in these capacities frequently heretofore, it has not been because they were professional men, but is due to particular circumstances, such as familiarity with an estate and the existence of confidential relationship. The executor and trustee must employ counsel. This is the lawyer's true position. Trust companies are like individual trustees in this respect, and most of them retain as their counsel in a particular matter the person who has before acted in that capacity. Then, too, it greatly facilitates the management of clients' business for a lawyer to be within easy reach of large aggregations of capital, controlled by officers known to him and to whom he is known, rather than scattered and hidden in the hands of private executors and trustees. Negotiations, settlements, loans, and transactions are thus feasible which otherwise would be almost impossible for members of the bar.

The real-estate title-insurance business cuts more directly into the lawyer's domain. While trustees have never necessarily been lawyers, the authors of opinions upon titles have always been lawyers. It must be confessed that the absorption of this branch of business by corporations does seriously affect the bar. Yet it should be remembered that the title-insurance companies have to rely upon lawyers' work, and the result probably is to concentrate rather than to destroy this branch of practice. It may be questioned whether the examination of titles has ever been to lawyers a really desirable expenditure of labor when the great responsibility and comparatively poor compensation are considered. A well-known real-estate lawyer used to say he never passed title to a row of buildings without a shudder on account of his experience of the risks involved. And it is the fact that much business comes to the companies directly from the bar, which frequently sends to them for searches, or examinations with insurance, and pays the small charge, rather than perform the necessary work. At all events, the bar cannot afford to stand in the way of progress. It should and does recognize improvements, and keeps abreast of the times. Any other course would be as indefensible as it would be for physicians to frown upon discoveries and new remedies on the ground that they decrease disease and dispense with the need for medical attendance.

Upon the whole, then, it may be regarded as certain that the transaction of fiduciary business by corporations is destined to increase enormously within the next few years; that it has many advantages where a strong company is selected, but that there are inherent objections in

the perfunctory management which characterizes it, and that this difficulty can best be obviated by the association together of an individual and a corporation as trustees, thus combining the personal care of the one and the security of the other. The examination and insurance of titles by corporations also is likely to grow with even greater rapidity until it has nearly supplanted, throughout the country, the work of individual abstractors and counsel. It may become a question whether this shall always be done by private enterprise instead of by government, but at present it suffices to call attention to the fact that the genuine title-insurance companies, having a plant and a system of counterbalancing checks, are far superior to corporations of counsel insuring each other's work without any system.

Thomas Learning.

OUR ONE HUNDRED QUESTIONS.

V.

32. Whence arose the superstition that there is luck in a horseshoe?

From the very general belief that a horseshoe would secure to its possessor immunity from the evil influence of witches, or other malignant spirits,—a belief founded upon a felicitous union in that one article of a *shape* and *material* specially repugnant to evil-doers.

First, as to its shape. Cox ("Aryan Myths") says, "That ornaments in the form of a vesica [bladder-shaped,—well represented by the horseshoe when held with the points up] have been popular in all countries as preservatives against danger, and especially from evil spirits, can be as little questioned as the fact that they still retain much of their ancient popularity in England, where *horseshoes* are nailed up as a safeguard against known and unknown perils." Butler ("Hudibras," ii. 8-29) says of his conjurer, he could

Chase evil spirits away by dint
Of sickle, horseshoe, and hollow flint,—

all of which charms partake of this vesica-shape.

A writer in *English Notes and Queries* wonders whether the "adoption of the horseshoe as a charm was not derived from the metal *meniscus* which we see over the heads of the Virgin and saints in old pictures." This is undoubtedly a most reasonable theory, as the *meniscus*, or crescent-like halo, is but another form of the *vesica piscis*, or oblong aureole, used in old paintings as a symbol of holiness. It is very natural that such attributes as belong to the sanctified should have been used in olden times to exorcise evil spirits: hence the theory that the horseshoe was hateful to witches is easily understood and accepted.

In ancient times, in moments of sudden emergency, when a horseshoe was not procurable, its form was simulated by holding up the hand with the first two fingers spread apart; and one feels inclined to wonder why, with so simple a remedy always at hand, the evil eye should not have been oftener averted.

Now as to the efficacy of the horseshoe because of its *material*,—*iron*. From the earliest ages *metals* of all kinds, particularly iron or steel, have been thought to counteract the influence of evil spirits. (See the ingenious but "far-fetched" hypothesis of Southwick, who supposes that a famous suit of iron armor, which was inscribed with the congratulatory German word "*Glück*," transferred this prosperous influence to the horseshoe because they were of a kindred material!) In Scandinavian mythology there is a race of beings called *Duergars*, who are remarkable for their skill in metallurgy. They fashion many wonderful and

extraordinary articles, which they secretly bestow upon such mortals as have deserved their favor, by leaving them lying in the roads where they may be picked up by seeming chance. Great misfortunes attend any one who asks for one of these gifts: it must be conferred voluntarily. Hence the superstition that an old horseshoe, or old iron in any form, will bring "good luck" only to him who finds it accidentally. The fact of his discovering it is supposed to intimate that the inventor intended it for him; but it will lose its virtue if it be transferred to another. The Arabian writers tell of a species of evil spirits, called Jinns, who were created before Adam. A translation from the Prophet says they were formed of "smokeless fire," "the fire of the wind Simoon;" and when the Arabs see the whirlwind sweeping over the desert they believe it to be "caused by the flight of an evil Jinnee, and cry out loudly, 'Hadeed! yâ meshoom! Hadeed! Hadeed!' ('Iron! thou unlucky one! Iron! Iron!') because this is a metal of which the Jinns are believed to have a great dread."

It is therefore evident from the foregoing facts that the horseshoe is abhorrent to evil spirits because it is shaped like a vesica and made of iron. As to the universality of the superstition which attributes "good luck" to its accidental possessor, many authors bear abundant testimony. In Essex they nail a horseshoe up on the stable door to keep away the "wild horse,"—which is supposed to steal the inmates of the stable by charming them through the key-hole. And in some portions of England horseshoes are buried under ash-trees, with the belief that they will lend a charm to the twigs and branches of the tree, so that they may be used with salutary results in brushing diseased cattle. We read that Lord Nelson had so great faith in the horseshoe that he sailed the seas with one nailed to the mast of his ship *Victory*; and "Lucky Dr. James" attributed the success of his fever-powders to his finding a horseshoe, which he adopted as a crest upon his carriage. Aubrey ("Miscellanies") says, "Under the porch of Stanniford Church, in Suffolk, I saw a tile with a horseshoe upon it, which was placed there to keep witches away,—though one might imagine that the holy water would have been sufficient." Mission was puzzled by the number of horseshoes he saw fixed at the entrance of English houses, and, upon inquiry as to the motive of this extraordinary style of decoration, was assured that they were intended to hinder witches from entering their domiciles and working their evil charms. The old friendly wish, "May the horseshoe never be pulled from your door!" (Holiday's "Marriage of the Arts,"), was the offspring of this superstition. Great stress is laid upon the position of the horseshoe when nailed to anything: the points must always be up. James T. Fields has written a poem called "The Lucky Horseshoe," which tells of a farmer who, having nailed to his door a horseshoe which he had found, could not understand why his affairs, instead of prospering, began from that moment to decline. A stranger asks to see the shoe, and discovers that the credulous but unenlightened farmer has nailed it "upside down." The difficulty is adjusted, all goes well, and the moral naturally ensues,—

There are two ways of doing things;
And when for good luck you would pray,
Nail up your horseshoe the right way.

DAVIS.

33. *Who was Peter Schlemihl, and did he have any prototype in real life or in legend?*

Peter Schlemihl, in a tale of this name by Adelbert von Chamisso, was a man who sold his shadow to a "little old man in gray" (the devil) who met him while fretting under a disappointment. The compact proved to be disastrous, and "Peter Schlemihl" has since become a synonyme for any one who makes a foolish bargain. "The story, to the older and sympathetic reader, is an allegory, only too accurate, of the poet's own life," says one writer. Hitzig, Chamisso's friend and biographer, has published what seems like a denial of this statement, but the facts of his life (a continued succession of mistakes and disappointments) would lead us to believe that (although perhaps unconsciously) he was himself the prototype of Peter Schlemihl. Or, if Dr. Faustus is to be considered an historical character, as many incline to believe, and we substitute *soul* for *shadow*,

he might well represent a real-life prototype for Peter Schlemihl. Fiske ("Myths and Myth-Makers") says,—and Grimm agrees with him,—“The tale of Peter Schlemihl belongs to a family of legends which show that a man's shadow has been generally regarded as a sort of spiritual attendant of the body, which, under certain circumstances, it may permanently forsake. In strict accordance with this idea, not only in classic languages, but in various barbaric tongues, the word meaning *shadow* expresses also the *soul*, or other self. And according to Grimm and Thorpe, Schlemihl's legendary prototype may be found in the hero of an old Spanish tradition, which tells of a cave in Salamanca where the devil maintained a class of seven pupils in the various branches of his art, on condition that when he should feel satisfied of their competency they should be dismissed, and the last one to leave the cave should pay the reckoning. The day of their graduation having arrived, the scholars were allowed to take their final leave; but when the last one was about to withdraw, the devil ordered him to remain, in accordance with the agreement. But the crafty scholar, pointing to his shadow which fell behind him, said, “That is the last,” and the devil was obliged to content himself thus, while the scholar went through life shadowless. Another legend, very similar to this, relates how the sacristan of Bröns, in the western part of the bailiwick of Hadersleben, in like manner outwitted his master. The sacristan was the last to leave the school, but his application to his studies had taught him how to help himself when the devil should lay hold on him. The school-door was towards the south, and it happened that the last lecture was finished in bright sunshine, exactly at noon, so that as the sacristan approached the door his shadow still lay behind him on the floor, and he therefore claimed that the shadow was the last to go, and must pay the penalty of servitude. To this just reasoning the devil could oppose nothing: so he let the sacristan depart, but retained his shadow. And the story further says that many who saw can testify that from that hour, even in the brightest sunshine, not the faintest appearance of a shadow accompanied the sacristan. It was always a popular belief that “losing one's shadow” happens to such as make a study of necromancy. Sir Walter Scott, when speaking of the Scottish superstition (Notes to “Lay of the Last Minstrel”), says, “When a class of students have reached a certain degree of progress in their mystic studies, they are obliged to run through a subterranean hall, where they are chased by the devil, who literally takes the hindmost [hence, “and let the devil take the hindmost”], unless he crosses the hall so speedily that the arch-enemy can only apprehend his shadow.” Therefore those who have lost their shadows always make the best magicians, because they have the benefit of a post-graduate course. And in the “Lay of the Last Minstrel,” in speaking of Lady Buccleuch's father, who had learned the art that none may name,

In Padua, far beyond the seas,

Scott says (Canto I., stanza xi.),—

For when, in studious mood, he paced
St. Andrew's cloistered hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall.

Peter Schlemihl's devil appeared as “a little old man in gray.” This was a favorite garb of the evil one, as many old legends will testify. In Germany there is a hill called Teufelsberg, where, it is said, a peasant, who was anxiously pacing up and down, and turning his troubles over in his mind, was accosted by a “gray old manikin” who agreed to build his barns and store his grain for him if he would will him his hidden treasure. This seemed a fair proposition to a poor man, but of course, in the end, the devil had the best of the bargain, as is usually the case.

It will also be remembered that in Marlowe's “Faust,” which appeared in 1588, Mephistopheles presents himself to his victim in the dress of a “gray friar.”

Chamisso wrote the tale of “Peter Schlemihl” in 1813, and it was soon translated into several other languages. It was composed partly to divert his attention from gloomier thoughts, and partly to amuse Hitzig's wife and children. Of its immediate origin, Chamisso says, “Schlemihl came forth in this way. I

had lost on a journey my hat, portmanteau, gloves, pocket-handkerchief, and all my movable estate. Fouqué, who was of our party, asked me whether I had not also lost my *shadow*; and we pictured to ourselves the effect of such a disaster. Another time, in turning over the leaves of a book by La Fontaine, I found a passage in which a very obliging man was described as producing all sorts of things from his pockets, in a party, as fast as they were called for: upon this I remarked that, only ask him civilly, the good fellow would, no doubt, produce a coach and horses. Here was Schlemihl complete in conception; and, as time hung heavy on my hands in the country, I began to write. I had picked up all sorts of practical knowledge of the supernatural, but it was not my object to embody my knowledge,—only to amuse Hitzig's wife and children, whom I looked upon as my public. And so it came to pass that others have laughed over my performance."—DAVUS.

34. *Who was the original of Sam Weller?*

In the *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, April 7, 1882, is a paper by E. L. Blanchard on "London Amusements," in which is this note concerning the performance of Mr. B. Webster's version of "Paul Clifford," produced at the Coburg Theatre, March 19, 1882: "Sam Vale, the Surrey low-comedy actor, whose whimsical comparisons were supposed to have suggested the idea of Sam Weller to Dickens, represented Dummie Dunnaker." In the *Gazette* for May 9, 1882, appeared another article by the same author, in answer to a comment on the first by Outhbert Bede, giving more items of interest on the identity of Vale with Weller, which are here condensed.

Some years before the appearance of Vale in "Paul Clifford," he had acquired a provincial reputation by impersonating Simon Spatterdash, a person who indulged in novel whimsical comparisons, and these peculiarities Vale afterwards introduced in his familiar talk with his associates. Spatterdash, a local militiaman, was a character in a musical farce, "The Boarding-House," by Samuel Beazley, music by Charles Horn, produced at the old Lyceum Theatre in 1811. These are some of his sayings:

"Come on," as the man said to his tight boot.

"I know the world," as the monkey said when he cut off his tail.

"Be quick I well, I will," as the fly said when he hopped out of the mustard-pot.

"I'm turned sojer," as the lobster said when he popped his head out of the boiler.

"I'm down upon you," as the extinguisher said to the rush-light.

"Let every one take care of themselves," as the donkey observed when dancing among the chickens.

"There she is, musical and melancholy," as the cricket said to the teakettle.

"Off with a whisk," as the butcher said to the flies.

"Sharp work for the eyes," as the devil said when a broad-wheeled wagon went over his nose.

"Where shall we fly?" as the bullet said to the trigger.

"I'm all over in a perspiration," as the mutton-chop said to the gridiron.

"Why, here we are all mustarded," as the roast beef said to the Welsh rabbit.

"When a man is ashamed to show the front of his face, let him turn round and show the back of it," as the turnstile said to the weathercock.

Vale, having as Spatterdash obtained a distinctive provincial reputation as a propounder of curious comparisons in this manner, continued this practice afterwards in private life, and the latest "Sam Valerism," as it used to be called from 1831 to 1836, found ready repetition from the lips of frequenters of theatrical taverns. From Samivel Vale, as he was styled by his Surrey admirers, to "Samivel Veller" is an easy transition, and it is very probable that Dickens found a suggestion for his famous character in the sayings of the droll actor who always was endeavoring to invent a bond of union between dissimilar things. Samuel Vale, who, for the richness of his humor, has never been surpassed by recent comedians, died in March, 1848, aged fifty-one. His mellow voice and unctuous utterance gave unusual value to his drolleries of expression, and when

transferred by Osbaldiston from the Surrey to Covent Garden Theatre he was recognized by West End play-goers as an actor of genuine ability.

"Pickwick" was first published in 1836, just after the time spoken of by Blanchard, when Vale's sayings were popular.

The following comments on the character may be found interesting:

"Sam Weller (and others) can never die; they are more real than ourselves, and will outlive and outlast us, as they have outlived their creator."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, June, 1871.

"It is nonsense to say of his characters generally that they are life-like. They are nothing of the kind. There never was a real Sam Weller," etc.—*North British Review*, May, 1851.

"Who can say he believes Sam Weller to be drawn from life?—or Kate Nickleby? . . . They live and move upon the stage as human beings; else they would be but the marionettes of a puppet-show, pulled by wires,—lay figures, that would be hooted from the view."—*North American Review*, October, 1853.

"Sam Weller is a monster; monstrous and impossible in two ways: first from within, by the law of his own being, which would not permit such a development as must have produced the creature Dickens has shown us; next from without, the conditions of life would restrain and repress such development, even if the germ of it existed. . . . Yet, monster as he is, how real he seems! he is a living monster; we know him. Sam Weller lives in our memories, a creature of flesh and blood more real than half our acquaintances."—RICHARD GRANT WHITE, in *St. James's Magazine*, August, 1870 (condensed).

"Will any candid reader assert that he finds Sam Weller comic in the only way worth having,—freely, freshly comic, without delay or second thought in our laughter?"—FRANCIS PHILLIMORE, *Introduction in "Dickens Memento,"* 1885.

"Sam Weller corresponds to no reality. The Londoner born and bred is apt to be the dullest and most uninteresting of beings. All things lost for him the gloss of novelty when he was fifteen years old. He would suit the museum of a *nil admirari* philosopher, as a specimen, shrivelled and adust, of the ultimate result of his principle. But Dickens collected more jokes than all the cabmen in London would utter in a year, and bestowed the whole treasure upon Sam."—BAYNE.

ONE OF A THOUSAND.

35. What bridge does Hood celebrate as the Bridge of Sighs?

There seems to be a wonderful contrariety of opinion in regard to the answer to this question. Some persons are quite positive that Hood meant "Waterloo," which is called the "Bridge of Suicides." Others as positively assert that they are confident that "Westminster" is meant. The majority seem to think that he had "London Bridge" in his "mind's eye" when he wrote the poem that has added another bit of interest to the old "Bridge of Sighs" at Venice.

The following extract is taken from a newspaper article describing London Bridge:

"This bridge is in the immediate vicinity of what may be called the seamy side of London. Poverty surrounds it, and more suicides take place from its coping than anywhere else in the city. On this bridge 'Little Dorrit' wandered from the Marshalsea. Here Martha, wretched with her life, came to throw herself in, and was saved by little Em'ly."

Another extract says,—

"There was a house called the 'Bridge of Sighs' down there by the London dock. It was a place so terrible that even the police called it in court the 'Bridge of Sighs,' because of the girls who had committed suicide there."

This place, as I understand, was close to "London Bridge;" therefore the logical deduction is that it derived its name from that bridge, and that "London Bridge" is the one celebrated by Hood.—OLIVE OLDSCHOOL.

But in a postscript "Olive Oldschool" adds that since writing the foregoing she has received a letter from Edmund Yates, saying, "Hood's Bridge of Sighs is, without doubt, Waterloo Bridge."

Walter Thornbury, in his "Haunted London," agrees with Yates. Stedman, however, in his "Victorian Poets," thinks the bridge meant is London Bridge. Probably the "Prose Laureate of the Fools" is right in his surmise that, while not specifically meaning any one bridge, Hood had in mind London Bridge. "The narrowness of its arches," says another of our competitors, "makes the channel very rapid, and to pass through them was termed 'to shoot the bridge.' An old London proverb ran, 'London Bridge was made for wise men to go over and fools to go under.'"

OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.

To the specimens of self-criticism given in the last Monthly Gossip these addenda may be made:

Albert Dürer wrote calmly to one who had found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done." Hazlitt speaks thus of his "Table-Talks": "I could swear (were they not mine) the thoughts in many of them are founded as a rock, free as air, the tone like an Italian picture." When John Dryden was congratulated on the beauty of his "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day," he answered, "You are right: a nobler ode was never produced, and never will be." John G. Saxe, coming out one day from the sanctum of the *Boston Post*, said exultingly to the first friend he met, "I have just left with Colonel Greene the finest sonnet that has been written since the days of Sir John Suckling." When Hogarth was at work upon his "Marriage à la Mode" he told Reynolds that the world would soon be gratified "with such a sight as it had never seen equalled." Baron Bunsen tells us that calling once upon Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, he found him greatly depressed. He had lately finished his "Christ" for Copenhagen, and he believed that his genius had reached its full height and must now begin to decline. "I have never before," he explained, "been satisfied with any of my works: I am satisfied with this, and shall never have a great idea again." George Eliot said that she never finished a novel without throwing aside her pen in the despairing belief that she could never write another line. "Good God, what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" was Swift's cry over the "Tale of a Tub" in the sad days when he had become a driveller and a show.

Is Whittier's "Snow-bound, a Winter Idyl," founded on fact? J. R. JONES.

It is a reminiscence of a day in the poet's early life, when the family, with some of their friends, were snowed-in by a heavy storm. The characters described are Whittier's father and mother; his uncle; his aunt, Mercy Hussey; his elder sister, Mary, afterwards Mrs. Caldwell; his younger sister, Elizabeth; the village school-master, Joshua Coffin; and a young school-mistress, Harriet Livermore, whom the poet compares to "Petruchio's Kate," and whose story is hinted at in the poem. She was a woman of great talents, of an ardent and enthusiastic disposition, but with an ungovernable temper. She fell fiercely in love

with a young surgeon, Moses Eliot, who returned her passion but felt that it would not be wise for him to unite himself to so violent a nature. He therefore went South to escape from the unhappy attachment, and died of yellow fever in Florida. After the death of her lover, Miss Livermore turned devotee, travelled through the Holy Land and Egypt, and finally settled down in Germantown, Philadelphia, where she died. The "wise old doctor" of the concluding lines was Elias Weld, to whom Whittier has dedicated his poem of "The Countess."

Who was St. Felicitas? I do not find her in Mrs. Jameson's or in Mrs. Clement's Handbooks. M. R. M.

St. Felicitas was a widow belonging to an illustrious Roman family. She had brought up her seven sons in the Christian faith, and was herself so eminent for her virtues that many were converted through her example. This was in the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus; and when the great persecution of the Christians took place she was one of the first to be cited before the tribunal of the prefect Publius. But she steadily refused to deny Christ and sacrifice to false gods. When reminded that her obstinacy would bring ruin not only upon herself but upon her beloved children, she replied that they knew how to choose everlasting life rather than eternal death. Then the prefect called the sons before him and commanded them to abjure Christ on pain of torments and of death, but their mother encouraged them to persevere in resistance, saying to them, "My sons, be strong in heart, and look up to heaven, where Christ and all his saints await your coming." One after another they were put to death, on July 10, 178. Januarius, the eldest, was scourged with leaded thongs; Felix and Philip were beaten with clubs; Sylvanus was thrown from a rock; Alexander, Vitalis, and Martial were beheaded. During their sufferings the mother stood heroically by and ceased not to comfort and encourage them; and when they were dead she thanked God that she had given birth to sons who had been deemed worthy of Paradise. Her hope was to follow them speedily, but the tyrant caused her life to be prolonged for four months in prison, in order that she might suffer a daily martyrdom of agony, hoping to subdue her spirit through affliction. But she remained firm in the faith. At length the time of her deliverance arrived, and, being dragged from prison, she was tortured in various ways, and then beheaded, or, as some say, thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, November 28, 178. In art she is represented hooded or veiled as a widow, bearing the martyr's palm, and accompanied by her seven sons. St. Felicitas is frequently confounded with St. Symphorosa, the Jewish martyr who, with her seven sons, was put to death under Antiochus Epiphanes, and the pictorial representations of them in mediæval art are so much alike that they have tended to increase the confusion.

Who was Isaac Bickerstaff?

Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was a name assumed by Dean Swift in a pamphlet (1708) directed against John Partridge, a vulgar almanac-maker who put forth astrological predictions. Bickerstaff announced that he would give no vague oracles, such as Partridge's, but would foretell events in a plain, straightforward manner. He began by predicting the death of Partridge himself at a given day and hour. On the day after the specified time a circumstantial narrative appeared recounting the fulfilment of the prediction. Partridge was foolish enough to answer with a protest that he was still living, whereupon

Bickerstaff issued a Vindication gravely arguing that the astrologer *was* dead, in spite of his assertions to the contrary. The joke was taken up by all the town wits; Rowe, Steele, Addison, and Prior contributed to it in various amusing ways; Congreve, in a pamphlet issued under Partridge's name, made the poor astrologer complain of the distresses and reproaches Squire Bickerstaff had exposed him to, so that he could not leave his door without being twitted for sneaking about without paying his funeral expenses; the Stationers' Company was induced to apply for an injunction against the continued publication of almanacs put forth under the name of a dead man; and it was even said that the Portuguese Inquisition had been taken in and had condemned Mr. Bickerstaff's predictions to the flames. When Steele started his "Tatler" the popularity of the name of Bickerstaff induced him to assume it as that of the pretended editor of that periodical.

"WHO was 'Bertha with the large foot'?"

H. M. S.

Bertha, the mother of Charlemagne, who died at an advanced age in 783, figures extensively in the cycle of Carolingian romances as Bertha with the large foot, *Berthe au grand pied*, and is also known in the folk-lore of France as Bertha the Spinner, *la fileuse*, and as *la Reine Pédaque*, a corruption of *Regina pede auca*. Her statues, which are common on the façade of old French churches, represent a crowned female with a swan's or a goose's foot, holding a distaff in her hand. From these attributes it is evident that a similarity of names has confused her in the popular imagination with the Freia-Holda-Bertha of Teutonic mythology. In the thirteenth century a minstrel named Adenés wove into epic form the many legends that clustered about the mother of Charlemagne. The poem acquired great popularity in the Middle Ages. It was recently printed in Paris. According to this authority, Bertha was the daughter of Flore and Blancheffor, King and Queen of Hungary. She was born with one foot larger than the other, whence her *sobriquet*. Being asked in marriage by Pepin of France, she was sent to him under the escort of her cousin Tybers. Now, in her train was a wicked woman named Margiste, whose daughter, Aliste, bore an extraordinary resemblance to Bertha. Margiste induced Tybers to join in a plot whereby Aliste was palmed off upon Pepin as his bride and the real Bertha was abandoned in a forest. For eight years the fraud was successful. Then Blancheffor determined to pay a visit to her daughter. As she passed through France she heard complaints on all sides of the wicked Queen Bertha. "Surely," she thought, "this cannot be my daughter." And, in fact, when she confronted Aliste she detected her by her feet, which were both of a size. Aliste was deposed and sent to a convent. Margiste was burned alive. Shortly after, a stag which Pepin was hunting led him to the forest glade where Bertha had found an asylum. She was recognized by her large foot, and Pepin married her. The conclusion of the story shows some analogy to the Cinderella myth. Bertha may also have some connection with the Queen of Sheba, who, according to a story in the Talmud, had a beautiful face, but large and ugly feet.

BOOK-TALK.

THE evolution of the modern illustrated gift-book forms a curious study. The protoplasmic germ, as it were, may be found in the old "Keepsakes," "Forget-Me-Nots," "Friendship's Offerings," and other annuals which pleased our grandfathers and our grandmothers at the beginning of this century. These were pretty little booklets, illustrated, as a rule, with steel engravings and contributed to by the most famous authors whom the publisher could obtain for love or money. In due time the books grew larger, but with the increase in magnitude the pictures and poems and stories did not always improve. Occasionally, indeed, some of the great masters condescended to appear in their pages, and occasionally a minor singer piped a true and pleasant note. But too often the contents were made up from contributions of lords and ladies who had little but their titles to recommend them, or from the fashionable novelists and versifiers who were prouder of their knowledge of fashion than of their knowledge of the heart. The "Amarantha" and the "Books of Beauty," the "Picturesque," "Landscape," and "Oriental" Annuals, the "Drawing-Room," "Juvenile," and other "Scrap-Books," are dreary enough reading at the present day. The engravings are usually better than the letter-press. Nevertheless the critics were pleased with them, and in the year 1840 indulged "in such unseemly praises and indecent raptures" that Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh was induced to contribute to *Fraser's Magazine* a slashing review, appropriately denominated "Our Annual Execution," for fear that "the public might believe that the verses which they contain are real poetry and the pictures real painting, and thus painters, poets, and public will be spoiled alike."

Perhaps Titmarsh's criticisms had some effect. For the old-fashioned annuals soon afterwards began to give way to the newer fashion of illustrated Christmas-stories by some popular author. It is to this fashion, heaven be praised, that we owe "The Christmas Carol," "The Cricket on the Hearth," and "The Rose and the Ring." But this fashion, too, died out, and the illustrated magazines then revived the "Annual" idea in their special Christmas numbers, which have been growing more and more gorgeous and beautiful every year. It was about twenty years ago that the holiday gift-books, illustrating some favorite poem or other literary masterpiece, began to appear on the book-shelves at Christmas time. These were modest and unpretentious at first. One publishing house and then another caught the idea, and each house for a while devoted all its energies to the production of some one book. But the taste of the public was attracted, the demand for these books grew so prodigious that now every publishing house has a number of new holiday books on its list every Christmas, adapted to every age and condition, to every taste and every purse.

J. B. Lippincott Company, for example, have no less than seven such books on their list. One of them is a smaller and cheaper edition of Keats's "Lamia" with Will H. Low's illustrations. The original edition has already been reviewed

in our pages, and it is not necessary to repeat the good words which the Reviewer found occasion to say at the time, the more so that the merits of the book are now well known and generally acknowledged. The present edition puts a little masterpiece of art within the financial reach of every one.

As a truthful picture of life and manners at the most corrupt period of the English court, Anthony Hamilton's "Memoirs of Count Grammont" will always retain an historical interest. As a bit of elegant and dainty writing, it will always remain a classic. As the portrait of a delightful rascal, courtly, accomplished, gay, witty, and unscrupulous, it will always appeal to that soft spot we have in our hearts for audacious roguery which has *chic* as well as cheek. Count de Grammont was one of those fortunate beings who are born with a good stomach and a tough conscience, and he successfully followed a career of pleasure during a lifetime of eighty-six years, defying the physician and the priest until his death-bed,—for, like all irreligious Frenchmen, he made a good end. J. B. Lippincott Company are the American publishers of an illustrated edition of this work. The text is a reprint of Sir Walter Scott's edition, with his preface and notes. The illustrations consist of thirty-three etchings, on India paper, by L. Boisson, from original compositions by C. Delort. The etchings are excellent in conception, exquisite in finish, and the book is handsomely printed and bound.

Adah Isaacs Menken is one of the most interesting figures in the annals of the American stage. Her wonderful personal beauty and her rare accomplishments, her splendid qualities and her outrageous faults, her pathetic end, have marked her out among American women. Her little book of poems, "Infelicia," has always been a favorite with readers who are moved or interested by the sight of a human heart bared to the world. The passion, the agony, the scorn of the outcast who feels that she is more sinned against than sinning have never found more potent words than in the unrhymed chants entitled "My Heritage" and "Judith." The Lippincotts have brought out a handsome new edition of this book, with illustrations by F. O. C. Darley, Harry Fenn, F. E. Lummis, F. S. Church, and others. Their list of holiday books for the current year is concluded by two books of etchings,—Goldsmith's "Traveller," illustrated by M. M. Taylor, and Goethe's "Hermann and Dorothea," illustrated by Hermann Faber, —and "Béranger's Songs and Lyrics," a selection from the best translations, illustrated with steel engravings of rare beauty from the latest French edition.

The following books have been received from their respective publishers:

G. P. Putnam's Sons: "Abraham Lincoln," by Noah Brooks, a well-told and interesting biography for young people, with illustrations of a fair order of merit. "A Hard-Won Victory," by Grace Denio Litchfield, a novel with a plot that is just saved from being commonplace by the bright and clever way in which it is told. "Undine" and "Sintram and His Companions," by De la Motte Fouqué, in one volume, a new addition to the exquisite Knickerbocker Nuggets. "The Story of Turkey," by Stanley Lane Poole, and "The Story of Media, Babylon, and Persia," by Zénaïde A. Ragozin, two new volumes in the "Story of the Nations" series, which keep up to the high standard of the former volumes. "In Castle and Cabin; or, Talks in Ireland in 1887," by George Pellew, an interesting series of essays. "Robert Emmet, a Tragedy of Irish His-

tory," by Joseph I. O. Clarke. "The Tariff History of the United States," a series of essays, by F. W. Taussig, wise and moderate in their tone, advocating a gradual reduction of the present duties. "Hints from a Lawyer on Legal Advice to Men and Women," by Edgar A. Spencer, who has fairly well carried out his avowed intention of preparing "a law-book for everybody, with reference to property, family, and commercial affairs, adapted to all the States." "The Independent in Politics," by James Russell Lowell, being No. XLVIII. of the "Questions of the Day" series. "The Religious Aspect of Evolution," by James McCoah, No. IV. of the "Bedell Lectures on the Evidence of Religion."

Punk & Wagnalls: "Nobody Knows; or, Facts that are not Fictions in the Life of an Unknown, by a Nobody," a miscellany of prose and verse prefaced by some remarks from William E. Barns, editor of "The Labor Problem," who orphically hints that "there is a Man behind the pages of this unique and instructive history," and that the Man "has been called 'the John the Baptist of the labor movement,' preaching repentance to all alike." The book is as silly and weak as might be expected from these prefatory remarks. "Poems, by Josiah Allen's Wife," a handsome volume, illustrated by W. Hamilton Gibson and others, but hardly justifying the glory of its attire. Miss Holley's prose is better than her verse. "The Ethics of Marriage," by H. S. Pomeroy, M.D., a sensible enough book, but offering nothing new to the reader's consideration. "The Presidential Campaign of 1896," a book that is just a little bit humorous and a little bit tiresome.

Henry Holt & Co.: "Richard Wagner's Poem 'The Ring of the Nibelung' explained and in part translated," by George Theodore Dippold, a scholarly and very interesting summary of the Nibelung cycle of myths. "A Mere Child," by L. B. Walford, a pleasant enough novel.

Houghton, Mifflin & Co.: "The King of Folly Island, and Other People," by Sarah Orne Jewett, a collection of short stories, delicate, graceful, and poetical, like all Miss Jewett's work. "Missouri, a Bone of Contention," by Lucien Carr, one of the most valuable and interesting of the series of "American Commonwealths," edited by Horace E. Scudder. "Beyond the Shadow, and Other Poems," by Stuart Sterne.

John P. Morton & Co.: "Blooms of the Berry," and "The Triumph of Music," by Madison J. Cawein, two books of poems full of the flavor of the Wild West, crude, perhaps, but instinct with vigor and life and passion.

T. B. Peterson & Brothers: "Kenneth Cameron," by Judge L. Q. O. Brown, a novel of life in New Orleans and its neighborhood, which will harm no one, and may prove a valuable lesson in patience and perseverance to those who can get through it. "The Maiden Widow," and "The Family Doom, or the Sin of the Countess," cheap editions of two novels by Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth, which are a little less tiresome and a little more harmful.

EVERY DAY'S RECORD.

DECEMBER.

DECEMBER, as its name signifies, was the tenth month in the ancient Roman year, being named from the Latin word for ten (*decem*). As in the case of the preceding months, it retained its original title when made the twelfth month in the year of Numa. In the reign of Commodus this month was named Amazonius, in honor of a favorite courtesan of the emperor whom he had painted like an Amazon; but this attempt to change its name failed, as all similar imperially-ordered names had failed except those of July and August.

By the ancient Saxons December was called *Winter-monat*, or winter month, which title, after they became Christians, was changed to *Heligh-monat*, or holy month, in honor of the nativity of Christ. Among the modern Germans it is still called *Christmonat*. For the same reason the Saxons of England began their year on December 25, which custom was continued till the Norman conquest, when the beginning of the year was changed to January 1, partly in consequence of William the Conqueror's being crowned on that day.

With December the season of winter begins, though nature does not always conform to the almanac in this respect. Occasionally weather of Indian-summer mildness extends far into the month, and in rare seasons invests Christmas with autumn temperature. But in other years winter comes early and fiercely, shrouding the dying November in a white pall of snow, and ushering in December with whirling blasts and biting frosts which it needs a combination of philosophy and warm clothing to sustain. The whilom prattling streams now lie cold and still in their fetters of ice; from the eaves of house and barn hang glittering icicles like a new and strange architectural ornament; and as far as the eye can

reach, the green of summer is replaced by wintry white, outspread upon hill and plain, and clothing the limbs of the trees in a chill mockery of their summer raiment.

But the beauty of nature does not die with the fading and fall of the flower and the leaf. Winter has charms of its own, which few of us would be willing to part with, even at the price of relief from its frigid atmosphere. December has its own floral treasures, frost-blossoms, painted in icy hues on the window-panes and shimmering in the flaking snows, while occasionally it adorns the trees in a glittering armor of ice, kindled to radiance by the sun, and forming one of the most charming visions upon which the eye of man has ever gazed. What can be more beautiful than the falling snow, what more charming than its toppling drifts, built by the wind into a wealth of fantastic devices, and where more mellow music than the silvery tinkle of the bells, as the light sleighs fly past like leaves borne on the blast? Truly winter has its enchantments that help us to endure with philosophic equanimity the bitterness of zero and the stinging needles of the northwest gale.

And as December glides onward towards its end all thoughts grow full and all hearts warm with anticipation of the coming Christmas festival, the most delightful holiday of the year. No cold nor storm can repel shoppers from the agreeable task of preparing pleasant surprises for their friends; and when the eventful morning arrives, and the glad voices of children resound with delight in the largess of Kris Kringle, echoed by the quieter tones but more heart-felt thanks of the older, who then but must feel that the cup of joy of the year is full, and thank God for the gift-season of December?

EVENTS.

December 1.

1683. This was one of the severest winters ever known in England, the season of cold continuing from December till February. Forest trees were split by the frost, most of the hollies killed, nearly all the birds perished, and the Thames was frozen eleven inches deep. "The people kept trades on the Thames as in a fair, till 4th February, 1684. About forty coaches daily plied on the Thames as on drye land." The Thames was similarly frozen in 1063, 1434, 1716, 1740, and on several later occasions.

1830. A destructive explosion occurred in the coal-mine at Pen-y-Graig, Wales. One hundred and one miners perished.

1832. The bridge over the Wissahickon, on the line of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, was completed. This is one of the best examples of stone-arch bridges in America. It is four hundred and ninety-two feet long, twenty-eight feet wide, and seventy-nine feet high above the creek-level.

1837. A severe earthquake at Sonora, Mexico, caused considerable destruction of property and much suffering of the inhabitants.

December 2.

1547. Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, died at Seville, Spain. No man of that age of adventure had a more diversified life or showed more brilliant powers as a military leader. His conquest of Mexico reads more like a romance than sober history, so much so, indeed, that the romances that have been written upon the subject deviate but little from the details of history, and the plain story as given by Prescott is perhaps the most romantic of them all.

1552. St. Francis Xavier, the "Apostle of the Indies," died. His life was spent as a missionary in the East, where he converted many thousands, in India, Japan, and elsewhere, to Christianity. He was canonized in 1622.

1697. St. Paul's Cathedral, London, was formally opened. This edifice is built on the site of a Roman temple. A Roman church was built there, which was destroyed and afterwards rebuilt by the Saxons. The Saxon church was destroyed by the fire of 1086, and a magnificent one erected which was burned in

1666. The present edifice was begun in 1675. It is five hundred and ten feet long, and two hundred and eighty-two wide, with an extreme height of four hundred and four feet.

1805. The great battle of Austerlitz was fought, Napoleon's army defeating the allied forces of Austria and Russia. The allies lost more than thirty thousand in killed and wounded, and thousands of prisoners.

1833. An address was made before "The General Trades-Unions of the City of New York," this being the first indication we possess of a combination of labor societies in America. Separate trade-unions had existed from early in the century.

1851. The *coup-d'état* of Louis Napoleon took place in Paris. After a brilliant reception held by the President during the previous evening, the leaders of the opposition were arrested in their beds and imprisoned in the castle of Vincennes. During the next day the Assembly was dissolved, universal suffrage decreed, and Paris declared in a state of siege. A rising of the people on the 3d and 4th was dispersed with troops, about eight hundred of the populace being killed. A vote was taken on the 21st and 22d for the election of a President for ten years, and Napoleon was elected by a very large majority.

1859. John Brown was executed at Charlestown, Virginia. We have spoken in the October events of the occasion of this execution, which excited much feeling in the North, the abolition party looking upon Brown as a martyr to their cause.

1879. A Dominion steamer, the *Borussia*, on her voyage from Liverpool, sprung a leak in the Atlantic after leaving Corunna, and sank, with a loss of about one hundred and sixty out of one hundred and eighty-four on board.

1885. A terrific storm at Colon, Panama, drove the ocean-waves into the town, causing great destruction of buildings. Out of twenty-nine vessels in the harbor, fourteen had disappeared at the end of the storm.

December 3.

1777. The first newspaper published in New Jersey, the *New Jersey Gazette*, was issued this day at Burlington.

1800. The battle of Hohenlinden was fought, the Austrians being defeated by the French and Bavarians under Moreau. The poet Campbell witnessed this battle, and commemorated it in his beautiful lyric beginning,—

"On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Isar rolling rapidly."

1818. Illinois was admitted as a State into the Union, its capital being changed from Kaskaskia to Vandalia. Springfield was made the capital in 1839. The territory lying north of the limits of the new State was annexed to Michigan.

1823. Belzoni, the celebrated Egyptian archaeologist, died at Benin, Africa, on his way to Timbuctoo. He was the son of a poor barber of Padua, and, having read the story of Robinson Crusoe, ran away from home and entered on a course of travels. He afterwards supported himself by performing as "the Patagonian Samson," his strength being so great that he could hold up from seven to ten men at once. His discoveries in Egypt, which were made subsequently, were described by him in a well-written and interesting work.

1839. Pope Gregory XVI. issued a bull prohibiting the slave-trade.

1881. A franchise bill was passed by the Italian Parliament which confers the right to vote on all men who are able to read and write.

December 4.

1642. Cardinal Richelieu, the most celebrated of European statesmen of the past, died at Paris. He had been for many years prime minister of France, ruling the king and the nobles imperiously, but making France everywhere respected by his ability as a statesman. The people expressed their joy at his death by bonfires. His life contained many remarkable incidents, which have been used and others invented by novelists and dramatists, thus doing much to enhance his fame.

1664. A naval battle took place between the English and the French, in which one hundred and thirty vessels of the Bordeaux fleet were destroyed by the English fleet under the Duke of York (afterwards James II.).

1732. The poet Gay, author of the once highly popular "Beggars' Opera," died. He wrote other sprightly plays and poems, and was highly esteemed as a poet. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

1808. The Spanish Inquisition was suppressed by Napoleon. It was suppressed again by the Cortes in 1818, re-

stored by Ferdinand VII. in 1814, and finally abolished by the Cortes in 1820.

1887. A heavy ocean-wave swept the coasts of Cuba and Porto Rico, destroying many habitations. The cause of such waves is not very clear. In some cases they may be due to distant storms, but in others they have been traced to earthquakes that affected the ocean-floor.

December 5.

1456. A terrible earthquake took place at Naples, in which forty thousand persons perished.

1792. Mozart, the great musical composer, died. This extraordinary genius (born in 1756) began to perform on the harpsichord when but four years of age, and by the age of six had composed short pieces of music. He was exhibited as a youthful musical prodigy, and in mature life produced a great number of beautiful compositions, among them the favorite operas "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Don Juan," his masterpiece. The "Requiem," his final composition, is very highly esteemed.

1870. Alexandre Dumas, the celebrated French novelist, died. He began his literary career as a dramatist, writing several plays, but his principal popularity came from his novels, in which he showed great power in the construction of plots, and remarkable literary fecundity. Among the most popular of these are "The Three Guardsmen" and "The Count of Monte-Cristo."

1876. The Brooklyn Theatre was burned, with a terrible destruction of life. The fire broke out during a performance before a crowded audience, and spread with frightful rapidity through the wooden structure. The usual panic, and impassable jam of narrow staircases, of such occasions took place, and two hundred and ninety-five persons perished in the flames.

December 6.

St. Nicholas's Day. The person to whom this day is dedicated was born in the fourth century, at Patara, in Lycia. His religious life began early, and he became conspicuous for piety and benevolence. St. Nicholas has been one of the most popular of saints. In England there are three hundred and seventy-two churches named in his honor, and in Russia he has been adopted as the patron saint of the nation. He is the special guardian of virgins, children, and sailors, scholars are under his protection, and he has even been regarded as the patron of robbers, from an alleged adventure with thieves whom he compelled to restore their stolen booty. Several interesting

legends are told of him, one referring to a nobleman of Patara who was so sunk in poverty that he could not provide for his daughters and was about to abandon them to a life of sin. A purse of gold was thrown through his open window, with which he was able to portion his eldest daughter. This happened a second and a third time, the relieved father on the third occasion discovering Nicholas in the act of throwing the purse. From this legend arose the practice of placing on the eve of St. Nicholas's Day little presents, as sweetmeats, etc., in the shoes or hose of the younger folks of the household, who attributed the gifts to the benevolence of the saint. In convents the young-lady boarders found their stockings filled with sweetmeats. This custom is now observed on Christmas Eve. In consequence of the above legend, St. Nicholas is often represented with three golden balls, from which the three balls of the pawnbrokers' signs may possibly have originated.

1875. The Deutschland, an Atlantic steamer from Bremen to New York, went ashore during a gale on a sand-bank at the mouth of the Thames. About seventy lives were lost, many being saved by a tug-steamer, the Liverpool.

1882. Louis Blanc, a French journalist and historian, died. His historical works are a "History of the Ten Years 1880-40" (six volumes) and a "History of the French Revolution" (twelve volumes). He held radical views on social reform, and was connected with that uprising of the workingmen which led to the bloody revolt of 1848. After its repression he escaped to England, where he remained in exile till 1870.

December 7.

43 B.C. Cicero, the famous Roman orator, was murdered by the emissaries of his enemy Mark Antony, having been proscribed by the triumvirate. Cicero was the most eloquent of the Romans, and surpassed all his countrymen in literary diversity. His letters, orations, and philosophical treatises stand at the head of Latin literature in those fields of thought.

1683. Algernon Sidney, an eminent republican patriot of England, was executed. He had been appointed one of the judges for the trial of Charles I., but was not present at his condemnation. He was arrested as an accomplice in the Rye-House Plot, convicted on slender evidence, and beheaded.

1782. Hyder Ali, the ablest opponent to the English conquest of India, died. At the head of the army of the Rajah of Mysore he had gained such advantages

over the English that they were forced to sue for peace and enter into alliance with him. After like success in a later war, he was defeated by an English army, and died the same year.

1787. The State of Delaware ratified the Constitution of the United States, being the first of the States to do so.

1815. Marshal Ney, the most famous of Napoleon's marshals, was shot for treason. He was born in 1769, the son of a cooper, and entered the army as a private in 1787, rising to the rank of brigadier-general by 1796. He was made marshal in 1804, and by his impetuous courage did much to aid Napoleon's success. On the abdication of Napoleon Ney entered the army of Louis XVIII., and on Napoleon's escape from Elba marched against him, promising to bring him back in an iron cage. Yet he went over with his army to his old commander, fought valiantly at Waterloo, and was arrested, tried for treason, and shot after the return of Louis XVIII.

December 8.

1859. Thomas De Quincey, one of the most eminent of modern English authors, died. He was a voluminous writer, his collected works embracing many volumes. Most of these are critical essays on poets and other writers, the work by which he is best known being "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," in which he describes his own experiences as a slave to that dangerous drug.

1869. A general council of the Roman Catholic Church met at Rome, there being present in all eight hundred and three dignitaries of the Church. After long discussion, the infallibility of the Pope as head of the Church was declared.

1881. A terrible fire broke out in the Ring Theatre at Vienna, causing the loss of over five hundred lives. It is supposed that a lamp-lighter set fire to a large veil used in the representation. In the panic on the stage the iron curtain was not lowered nor the fire-alarm signal given, and the audience first knew what was passing when the curtain was suddenly rent in two and the stage revealed as a sea of flame. The fire spread through the house with frightful rapidity, and a terrible crush took place on the narrow wooden stairs that led from the galleries. The terror was redoubled by the sudden extinguishment of the gas-lights, leaving the struggling crowd in darkness. Most of those in the pit escaped, and many leaped from the upper windows, but the mass of the audience perished in the smoke and flames.

1883. Barnum's white elephant left

Rangoon for New York. This animal, the first white elephant that was ever suffered to leave the country, is said to have been purchased from the King of Siam for two hundred thousand dollars. The whiteness of the elephant was a dun pallor that did not prove very attractive, and its drawing-power as a show-animal soon vanished.

1885. William H. Vanderbilt, the richest man in the United States, died. He had inherited the bulk of his wealth from his father, who, beginning life as a poor boy, amassed an immense fortune. The will of his son proved that in eight years after his father's death he had increased his estate of one hundred millions to one hundred and eighty-five millions of dollars, of which sixty millions were left to each of his two sons, ten millions to each daughter, and an abundant provision to his widow.

December 9.

1572. The famous siege of Haarlem, an important incident in the revolt of the Netherlands against Spanish rule, began. It was conducted by the Duke of Alva, and continued till July, 1573, causing the loss of twelve thousand Spanish troops. The brutal Alva, on taking the city, violated the terms of capitulation and massacred half the inhabitants. But its obstinate resistance proved highly useful to the struggling provinces.

1641. Sir Anthony Vandyke, the celebrated Flemish portrait-painter, died. After residing in various parts of Europe, he went to England about 1632, painted portraits of Charles I., and spent the remainder of his life in that country. His works are very numerous, and he is considered the greatest portrait-painter of modern times except Titian, while some critics prefer him to that artist.

1674. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, an eminent English statesman and historian, died. Born below the rank of the nobility, his powers of statesmanship raised him to high office, and he became under Charles II. prime minister and lord chancellor, with the title of Earl of Clarendon. Afterwards losing the royal favor, he went into voluntary exile and died in France. His great work, the "History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars," is much esteemed, though by no means free from faults.

1826. John Flaxman, an eminent British sculptor, died. He gained high celebrity for his admirable outline compositions in illustration of Homer, *Æschylus*, and Dante, and later in life produced admired statues of Lord Nelson and others, with classic figure-pieces, and the group of the "Archangel Michael

and Satan." Canova and others pronounce him the greatest of modern sculptors.

1874. The transit of the planet Venus over the sun, the first that had taken place for more than a century, was observed by astronomers in different parts of the globe. Another transit took place on December 6, 1882. There will be no other for a century. These transits were considered of great importance by astronomers, as affording data for estimating the true distance of the sun from the earth.

December 10.

1720. John Law, the originator of the famous Mississippi scheme, fled from Paris, his speculative bubble having burst. He had formed a Mississippi and East India improvement company, whose profits were to pay off the national debt of France. The subscriptions to the stock were enormous, the shares of Law's bank rose to twenty times their par value, and the eventual failure of the scheme spread ruin throughout France. Law died in poverty at Venice in 1729.

1832. President Jackson issued his famous proclamation against the revolutionists of South Carolina, who had attempted to nullify the tariff laws of the country. His proclamation declared the supremacy of the Federal authorities in all such matters, and exhorted the citizens of South Carolina not to persist in their illegal course. At the same time he sent troops and a sloop-of-war to Charleston to protect the revenue-officers in the discharge of their duties. No collision took place, and the tariff was subsequently modified.

1853. A fire broke out in the building occupied by the great publishing firm of Harper & Brothers in New York. The whole establishment was destroyed, with all its contents, except a portion of the stereotype plates that were stored in vaults under the sidewalks. The loss was over one million dollars.

1870. The German Empire was declared, William I. of Prussia being invited by a vote of the Parliament to assume the title of Emperor of Germany. This event was an outcome of the success of the Germans in the Franco-Prussian war. Bismarck has been credited with the authorship of the scheme, but the recently published papers of the late Emperor Frederick give him the credit of its origination.

1877. The fortified city of Plevna was taken, in the Russo-Turkish war. This town was defended with extraordinary vigor, and its defence gave great credit to its commandant, Osman Pacha. The town was occupied by the Russians July

6, 1877, but retaken by Osman July 18, after which it was besieged by the Russians, with many sanguinary conflicts, in which all the Russian attacks were repulsed. Osman, desperate from want of supplies, attempted to break out on the night of December 9, but was defeated with great slaughter and forced to surrender unconditionally. Thirty thousand prisoners and one hundred guns were taken.

December 11.

1718. Charles XII., the famous Swedish conqueror, was killed by a ball at the siege of Frederikshall. He had exhibited an extraordinary military genius in his wars against Russia, Poland, and Denmark, and gained many victories, but in a final invasion of Russia he was defeated at the decisive battle of Pultowa, 1709. He retreated to Turkey with a small body of men. Here he was hospitably received and remained till 1718, when he was forced to leave that country in disguise, and returned to Sweden. He was killed during an invasion of Norway.

1861. A destructive fire broke out in the city of Charleston, South Carolina, which destroyed a large portion of the business section of the city. The loss was estimated at five millions of dollars.

1866. The French troops, which had captured Rome from the revolutionists in 1849, and held that city as a guard to the Pope, were withdrawn, in pursuance of an agreement made two years before. This opened Rome to occupation by the Italian army, which took place in 1870.

December 12.

1757. Colley Cibber, a witty English playwright and actor, died. He was a favorite comic actor, and wrote several amusing plays, of which "The Careless Husband" is considered the best. He is a prominent character in Pope's "Dunciad."

1787. Pennsylvania ratified the Constitution of the United States, being the second State to do so.

1849. Bruhel, the celebrated engineer who built the Thames Tunnel, died. He was a native of France, which country he left to avoid the reign of terror, and emigrated to New York, where he built the Bowery Theatre. The great work of his life was the Thames Tunnel, which was at that period a remarkable triumph of engineering skill. It was begun about 1825 and finished in 1848.

1866. A terrific explosion took place at the Oaks coal-mine, near Barnsley, England, in which about three hundred and sixty persons lost their lives. On the

following day twenty-eight searchers were killed by a fresh explosion.

December 13.

1545. The celebrated Council of Trent began its sessions. This council of the Roman Catholic Church continued in session till December, 1663, a period of eighteen years, under three Popes. It decreed the Catholic canon of Scripture, and that the Church was its sole interpreter, that the traditions were equal in authority with Scripture, the seven sacraments, and many other dogmas of the Church.

1577. Francis Drake, one of the most famous of English navigators, set sail on a voyage round the world. He had five small vessels, and his intentions were to rob the Spanish settlements in America. He obtained great treasure by plunder on the coasts of Chili and Peru, and sailed far north in the hope of finding a passage to the Atlantic. On his return he put into the port of San Francisco, then first visited, and returned home by way of the Cape of Good Hope in 1579. Queen Elizabeth knighted him for this achievement, instead of hanging him for acts of piracy against a nation with which England was at peace, as would be done under modern laws.

1784. Samuel Johnson, one of the most eminent of eighteenth-century writers, died. His greatest work is his Dictionary of the English Language, the first extended English dictionary; but he was the author of many other works, of considerable merit, though written in a heavy and artificial style. His dictionary is perhaps the most remarkable work of the kind ever produced by a single person. The labor upon it was enormous, and occupied many years of his life.

1862. The battle of Fredericksburg, one of the most terrible battles of the American civil war, was fought between the armies of General Burnside and General Lee. Burnside had thrown his army across the Rappahannock, while Lee occupied the heights back of the town. The conflict that followed was a desperate one, but Lee was too strongly posted to be dislodged, and Burnside, after great loss, withdrew. The Federal loss was over ten thousand, the Confederate less than half that number.

1867. An explosion of a barrel of gunpowder took place near the wall of Clerkenwell Prison, London, its purpose being the release of Burke and Casey, two leading Fenians who were imprisoned there. The attempt failed, but resulted in the death of six persons, while one hundred and twenty were wounded,

of whom six died, many others being permanently injured.

1884. A dynamite explosion took place under London Bridge, supposed to be of Irish origin. About twenty pounds of dynamite were exploded, causing great alarm and considerable damage in the neighborhood, though no serious injury was done to the bridge. The perpetrators were not discovered.

December 14.

1799. General Washington died at Mount Vernon, where he had resided in private life since the end of his Presidency. The greatest sorrow was everywhere manifested at his death, and in the funeral oration by General Lee Washington was designated by the celebrated expression, "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

1819. Alabama was admitted into the Union as a State.

1861. Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, died. He was born in 1819, as Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and married Victoria in 1840. His amiable character, discretion as an adviser of the queen, and strong interest in the progress of art, agriculture, and all benevolent enterprises, made him a favorite with the British people, and his loss was deeply felt.

1873. Louis Agassiz, one of the most distinguished of modern naturalists, died at Cambridge, where he had long held the professorship of zoology and geology at Harvard College. He was born in Switzerland in 1807, but resided in the United States after 1846. His researches in zoology were of unsurpassed value, while as a writer and lecturer his easy, colloquial command of the English language made him a general favorite.

1875. An explosion in a colliery near Mons, Belgium, caused the death of one hundred and ten miners.

December 15.

* 1683. Izaak Walton died. He was the author of several works, principal among which was "The Complete Angler, or Contemplative Man's Recreation," published in 1658. This work was received with the utmost favor, and has become a British classic. Hazlitt considers it the best pastoral in the English language.

1809. The divorce of the Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon I., took place. There was no event in Napoleon's life for which he has been more blamed than this act of heartless state policy. The character of Josephine has been unduly exalted by modern writers,

yet she was amiable and attractive, her worst faults being extravagance and vanity.

1836. A serious fire in Washington City destroyed the general post-office and the Patent Office. In the latter building there were burned ten thousand valuable models of patented machines, drawings, etc.

1840. The remains of Napoleon Bonaparte, brought from St. Helena, were deposited in the chapel of the *Hôtel des Invalides* at Paris. The occasion was one of great ceremony, one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers assisting in the obsequies, which were witnessed by a million of people.

1864. The battle of Nashville took place. In this severe engagement the Confederate force under Hood was so severely defeated by General Thomas that it never took the field again. Twenty-five thousand prisoners were taken, and the army completely dispersed. This decisive defeat ended the war in that quarter of the Union.

1886. Ex-Alderman McQuade of New York was found guilty of accepting bribes in the granting of the Broadway street-railway franchise, and was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and five thousand dollars' fine. The severity with which the criminals in this affair were handled will probably have some effect in clearing the moral atmosphere of New York City.

December 16.

1773. This was the day of the celebrated Boston "Tea-Party," the occasion of which may be briefly described. England, finding that the colonists would not pay taxes laid by the British Parliament without their consent, took the tax off all goods except tea, and sent several cargoes of tea over to America. This the people of several cities refused to receive, but in Boston, where the rebellious feeling was strongest, a party of men disguised as Indians boarded the vessels, broke open the chests, and poured all the tea into the harbor. They "made a pot of tea of Boston Harbor," as some one expressed it.

1811. The great Mississippi earthquake, the most violent that has taken place in the United States within historic times, occurred on this day. It was very widely extended, being felt throughout all the settled parts of the country, though the valley of the Mississippi was the central region of disturbance. A traveler who was on the river near its centre says that great trees were hurled to the ground, and that thousands of trunks which were buried in the bed of the river shot upward to the surface. The banks

fell in great masses into the stream, and huge cracks opened in the earth, many of which yet exist as the beds of bayous and lakes. The shocks were repeated at frequent intervals during two days, and during the next two years earthquake-shocks were frequent in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys.

1835. One of the most serious fires ever known in the city of New York took place on this day. It broke out in the wholesale dry-goods business-section of the city, and before it could be mastered seven hundred buildings had been reduced to ashes, while the total loss from the conflagration was seventeen millions of dollars. The burned district covered an area of fifty acres.

1837. A destructive earthquake in Calabria buried Montemurro and other towns, with a loss of life of about ten thousand persons. It is said that in the seventy-five years from 1783 to this date one hundred and eleven thousand persons were killed by earthquakes in the kingdom of Naples.

1884. The World's Fair at New Orleans was opened this day. The opening was signalled by President Arthur by telegraph from Washington, the electric current causing the great engine to revolve and the machinery to start into busy motion. The exhibit from foreign countries at this fair was of minor importance, but an excellent display was made of products of the United States, Mexico, Central America, and South America. The main building was the largest ever erected for such a purpose. It was 1378 feet long by 905 wide, and covered a space of thirty-three acres. The Exhibition closed May 31, 1885.

December 17.

1830. General Simon Bolivar, the Liberator of South America, died. After years of fighting, he drove the Spaniards out of Venezuela and New Granada, which united to form the republic of Colombia, of which he was chosen the first president, in 1819. Afterwards he achieved the independence of Peru (in 1824), its upper district being made a separate state, called after him Bolivia. He ruled these countries as president till his death.

1833. Kaspar Hauser died. The history of this person was remarkable. He was first seen in the streets of Nuremberg in 1828. He was dressed like a peasant, was sixteen or seventeen years of age, could speak but a few sentences, and walked with difficulty, his feet being small and white, with no marks of his having ever worn shoes. It proved on close inquiry that he had been kept from infancy

in a dark underground prison, fed on bread and water, and cared for during his sleep by an unknown person. Afterwards a man appeared who taught him to write and to walk and brought him to the vicinity of Nuremberg. He showed a strong desire for knowledge, and an excellent memory. One day he was wounded in the forehead by an unknown person, and some years afterwards was invited to a rendezvous by a person who promised to give him information of his origin. While Hauser was reading a paper, this person stabbed him in the side and escaped. Three days afterwards the mysterious youth died. Many conjectures were made as to his origin, but nothing was ever discovered.

1860. The South Carolina secession convention met, and three days afterwards adopted an ordinance of withdrawal from the Union. This was the first act in that movement of secession which led to the terrible civil war of the United States. Nearly all the slave-holding States seceded in the following month.

1878. Gold sold at par value in New York, being the first time for seventeen years. On January 1 succeeding, the United States government resumed specie payments, and paper money once more became of equal value with gold. From that time to this no one has desired gold in preference to paper money, from the fact that the latter is much more convenient.

December 18.

1787. The State of New Jersey ratified the Constitution of the United States.

1803. Johann von Herder, one of the ablest and most original of German writers, died. His knowledge was extraordinary, and his works were numerous, though few or none were finished. The greatest of them is his "Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind."

1807. The "Milan Decree" of Napoleon, against all commercial intercourse with England, was promulgated. This declared that any ship was a lawful prize that had had intercourse of any kind with Great Britain. The results of this, and of similar measures taken by England, were the principal inciting causes of the war of 1812 between the United States and England.

1835. Samuel Rogers, an English poet of some eminence, died. The work by which he is best known is the "Pleasures of Memory," a beautiful and highly-finished poem. He was a wealthy banker, and his house was a resort of the literary and political celebrities of his period.

1865. The total abolition of slavery in the United States was officially an-

nounced. This simply declared what already existed. President Lincoln had proclaimed the abolition of slavery in the seceded States in 1863, and the submission of the Southern armies made abolition a practical fact.

1867. A serious accident occurred on the Lake Shore Railroad, New York, occasioned by the fall of an embankment. The cars took fire, and forty-one persons were burned to death.

1871. The Alabama Commission met at Geneva. This commission was called to arbitrate between Great Britain and the United States upon the damages due the latter for the ravages committed upon American shipping by the Confederate privateer Alabama, which had been constructed in England and sailed from an English port. The commission was composed of an Italian, a Swiss, a Brazilian, an English, and an American representative. It adjourned till June 15, 1872, and reached a decision adverse to Great Britain on September 14, as already stated in our September article.

1885. Congress voted in favor of granting an annual pension of five thousand dollars to the widow of General U. S. Grant.

December 19.

1621. The right to free discussion was claimed by the House of Commons of England. This was an important step towards the liberties of England, for Parliamentary debate adverse to the ruling powers was at that period a not very safe proceeding.

1857. Turner, the eminent English landscape-painter, died. He was one of the first to avoid the classic methods and go directly to nature for his inspiration, which fact incited Ruskin to the writing of his celebrated work, "Modern Painters." Turner left numerous highly-admired works, many of them in water-colors. On his death he bequeathed a large number of oil-paintings to the nation. These are exhibited in the National Gallery.

1872. The exposure of the Credit Mobilier scandal began in Congress. This was a joint-stock company interested in constructing the Union Pacific Railroad, whose stock, by secret manipulations, had been raised to a high price. It was discovered that several members of Congress were secret holders of this stock, and it was strongly suspected that they had received it as bribes to induce favorable legislation. After an investigation, the Senate committee recommended the expulsion of one implicated Senator. But his term expired five days later, and no further action was taken.

The House censured two of its members.

1878. Bayard Taylor, the most popular of American writers of travels, died at Berlin, being then United States minister to Germany. His first tour was made through Europe on foot, and was described in his "Views Afoot." He made journeys through other parts of the world, which he described in later works. He was also a poet of fine powers, and wrote several popular novels. His translation of Goethe's "Faust" is perhaps the best English rendition of that famous dramatic poem.

December 20.

1686. Sir Edmund Andros, who had made himself very unpopular while governor of New York, reached Boston, having been appointed governor of the New England colonies. His rule was the first serious effort to suppress the liberty of those colonies, and the arbitrary actions of Andros made him exceedingly unpopular. On the landing of the Prince of Orange in England the Bostonians rose in revolt, imprisoned Andros, and resumed their former democratic system of government.

1745. Charles Edward, "The Pretender," retreated to Scotland, after his invasion of England. He was the son of James II., who had resigned the throne in his favor. Passing from France to Scotland, he raised an army of Highlanders and marched into England, but was obliged to retreat, and was completely defeated at Culloden in 1746. Charles concealed himself in the Western Islands, had many romantic adventures in hiding from his pursuers, and finally escaped to France by the aid of a Scottish heroine, Flora Macdonald, who suffered a few months' imprisonment for this offence.

1776. The United States Congress, which had hitherto held its sessions in Philadelphia, adjourned to Baltimore in consequence of the near approach of the British army to the former city. It continued in session at Baltimore from this date till March, 1777.

1847. The Avenger, an English steam frigate, foundered off the coast of northern Africa, with the loss of the officers and crew, nearly two hundred in number.

1848. Louis Napoleon was elected President of the newly-declared French republic. There were five candidates, he receiving a large majority of votes.

1887. A huge lumber raft, made up of trunks of Canadian trees, which was being towed from Nova Scotia to New York, was abandoned at sea in consequence of a violent storm. It broke up

in the waves, and much apprehension was felt of danger to vessels from the great logs adrift in the ocean. No injury to shipping has as yet been reported, but danger from these floating logs is by no means at an end. They are reported as being in great numbers in the ocean near Madeira, covered with barnacles, and waterlogged so that they float just below the surface, thus greatly increasing the risk of collision. While out of the track of trans-Atlantic steamers, they are near the entrance to the Mediterranean.

December 21.

The Halcyon Days of ancient times comprised the seven days preceding and the seven following the winter solstice, or the shortest day of the year. The fable ran that during this period the halcyon bird (or kingfisher) was engaged in hatching her eggs, laid in a floating nest in the midst of the waters. In consequence the sea was supposed to remain calm and navigation to be perfectly safe. It is not easy to understand how such an idea could have been held in the face of the storms which must have often occurred during that period.

1375. Giovanni Boccaccio, author of the famous "Decamerone," died. The stories of this collection, which are esteemed models of Italian prose, form the earliest examples of elegantly written prose in modern times. They possess the fault of much of the literature of that period, of being very licentious. These tales were freely used by later writers, to whom they furnished plots for dramas and poems.

1549. Margaret of Navarre, authoress of the "Heptameron," died. This is a collection of tales in the style of Boccaccio's "Decamerone," and fully as licentious as the latter. Yet they are esteemed as fine examples of early French prose composition.

1719. The *Boston Gazette*, the second newspaper in America, issued its first number. It was printed by James Franklin (brother of Benjamin Franklin), who two years afterwards started a paper of his own.

1864. General Sherman took possession of the city of Savannah, thus completing his "March to the Sea." From that point he soon after marched northward through Georgia and the Carolinas.

1885. A grand ovation was paid to Leopold von Ranke, the eminent German historian, on the occasion of his ninetyeth birthday. Great honors were paid him by literary men and the highest dignitaries of the realm. Ranke was engaged on his "Universal History" till near the time of his death, May 23, 1886.

December 22.

1719. The *American Weekly Mercury* was started in Philadelphia, its first number being issued on the day after that of the *Boston Gazette*. It was the first newspaper published in the United States outside of Boston, and the third in the country. In this we do not include the Boston paper attempted in September, 1690, of which only one number was published and only one copy is known to be in existence.

1807. The Embargo Act was passed by the United States Congress. This was in reprisal for the blockade decrees of France and England. All vessels were forbidden to leave United States ports with goods for foreign countries. It was supposed that the deprivation of American goods would so injure the offending countries as to force them to rescind their decrees; but the chief injury was to the United States.

1810. The *Minotaur*, a British seventy-four-gun frigate, was wrecked on the Haak Bank, with a loss of three hundred and sixty lives.

1818. Sir Philip Francis, the supposed author of the famous "Junius" letters, died. These letters, which strongly assailed the government, were written with much ability, and created great interest and excitement. Their authorship has never been revealed, but in all probability they were written by Francis, whose style they closely resemble.

1831. An insurrection of the negro slaves in Jamaica, in which many plantations were burned, caused the governor to declare martial law. The measures taken in consequence quickly brought the outbreak to an end.

1835. Texas proclaimed its independence. This led to a war with Mexico, which resulted in an acknowledgment of the independence of Texas in 1840. Its subsequent annexation to the United States led to the Mexican War.

1864. The steamer *North America*, which left New Orleans on the 16th, foundered at sea. Most of those on board were sick soldiers, of whom nearly two hundred were lost.

1880. Mary Ann Evans, much better known under her pseudonym of George Eliot, died at Chelsea on this day. This eminent writer is considered by most critics as the ablest of all woman novelists, and has left a series of works some of which promise to become English classics. She was born in 1819, and was married in the spring before her death to a Mr. Cross.

1887. A large quantity of naphtha was accidentally discharged into a main sewer of Rochester, New York. An ex-

plosion and fire followed, in which several large buildings were destroyed. Four men were killed and twenty injured by the explosion.

December 23.

1783. General Washington resigned his commission and retired to private life. This was the end of his long military career, in which he had gained a fame unsurpassed in the annals of war. The resignation was received by Congress with great ceremony, and the occasion was one of the most impressive in the history of the country.

1814. Congress passed a new postal law, to take effect on the 1st of the ensuing February. The rates of letter-postage were to be twelve cents for any distance not over forty miles; fifteen cents for distances from forty to ninety miles; from ninety to one hundred and fifty miles, eighteen and three-quarter cents; from one hundred and fifty to three hundred miles, twenty-five cents; from the latter distance to five hundred miles, thirty cents; over five hundred miles, thirty-seven and a half cents. Since that period there has been a remarkable decrease in rates of letter-postage.

1876. A new political constitution was proclaimed in Turkey, which instituted several important reforms for that land of tyrannous oppression. Among these were freedom of all creeds, of the press, and of education; individual liberty; equality of taxation; a legislative body consisting of a senate and of two chambers to be elected by ballot, etc. These reforms can scarcely be said to exist as actual conditions to-day in Turkey.

December 24.

1728. The second Philadelphia newspaper, entitled *The Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences, and Pennsylvania Gazette*, was issued. It was published by Keith, a rival printer to Benjamin Franklin, to forestall the latter, who had designed starting a paper. It was absurdly conducted, being largely made up of articles copied from an encyclopædia. Keith failed in his enterprise, and sold out the paper to Franklin, who reduced its name to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and issued his first number October 2, 1729, greatly changing the character of the paper. It continued in existence till November 3, 1845, when it became merged in the *North American*.

1811. A terrible storm off the coast of Jutland caused the wreck of three British men-of-war,—the *St. George*, of ninety-eight guns, the *Defence*, of seventy-four guns, and the *Hero*. Of the officers and

crews, more than two thousand in all, only eighteen men escaped.

1814. The treaty of peace which ended the second war between Great Britain and the United States was signed at Ghent. Unfortunately, the transmission of news at that period was so slow that the destructive battle of New Orleans was fought two weeks afterwards, in ignorance of the fact that war had ceased between the two countries.

1851. The library of Congress, at Washington, was destroyed by fire, thirty-five thousand volumes, with valuable works of art, being burned.

1852. The *St. George*, a passenger-steamship from Liverpool to New York, was burned at sea. There were on board one hundred and fifty persons, of whom fifty-one were lost, the others being saved by the American ship *Orlando*.

1856. Hugh Miller, the celebrated Scotch geologist, killed himself with a pistol during a paroxysm of insanity. He was a stone-mason by trade, but became deeply interested in geology, and wrote several highly attractive works. Overwork destroyed his mental balance, and produced the insanity that led to his suicide.

1862. Otho, King of Greece, abdicated. This monarch, Otho of Bavaria, had been made king in 1832, shortly after the establishment of Greek independence. An insurrection broke out in 1862, and he was forced to fly for his life, after being deposed by a provisional government. Prince Alfred of England was proposed and proclaimed as king, and an almost unanimous vote taken in his favor. In the following year Prince William of Schleswig-Holstein was offered and accepted the crown. He was proclaimed as King George I.

1863. Thackeray, the eminent English novelist and humorist, died. Among his popular works may be named "Vanity Fair," "Henry Esmond," "Pendennis," "The Newcomes," "Lectures on the Four Georges," etc. As a novelist he stands very high among nineteenth-century writers, while his humorous essays are full of effective satire.

December 25.

Christmas Day, the supposed anniversary of the birth of Christ. This day is said to have been first kept as a festival in 98 A.D., and was ordered to be kept as a solemn fast by Pope Telesphorus, about 187. Since that date it has been the most important festival of Christendom, and it is still kept as a day of feasting and merry-making, as well as of religious observance, throughout the whole Christian world. The use of holly and mistle-

too, so common as Christmas decorations, is probably a remnant of the pagan observances of the Druids, and the burning of the Yule-log, which was a prominent feature of the Christmas of Old England, was also of pagan origin. The old Christmas festival was held to extend from Christmas to Twelfth Day, this whole period being filled up with merry-making; but the modern world is too full of business to devote more than one day at a time to pleasure. In the older Christmas observance there were many ceremonies that are now obsolete. The Mummings, fantastically dressed and masked persons, made their rounds on Christmas Eve, and the same was the case with the Lord of Misrule and his followers, another crew of fantasics in dress and behavior. The Waits, who made their rounds with song and instrumental music, still retain a feeble vitality. One of the oldest and most persistent observances of Christmas Day is the singing of the Christmas carols, celebrating in joyous strains the nativity of the Saviour.

In recent times new observances have come into vogue. The pleasant German idea of the Christmas-tree has been brought by German emigrants to America, and is now thoroughly acclimated here. Perhaps to this is due the very general giving of Christmas-presents which now adds so decidedly to the "peace and good will" of Christmas morning. Christmas dinner is an institution of remote origin, but its methods have changed with the spirit of the times. The boar's head of Old England has given way to the goose and plum-pudding of modern times, while in the United States the Christmas turkey is a necessity of the situation, without which the day would seem a hollow mockery. Mincepie is also equally necessary, and the amount of dyspepsia laid up by ordinarily frugal individuals on that day is something frightful to contemplate.

1638. The city of Bagdad, the capital of the old Saracen empire, was taken by the Turks, who have held it ever since. Before that period this city had been often taken and retaken, and many thousands of its inhabitants slaughtered in war.

1837. The battle of Lake Okechobee, in Florida, was fought by the American army, under General Taylor, and the Seminole Indians. The conflict, fought in the swampy region of that part of Florida, was a severe one, but ended in the defeat of the savages, who suffered a disastrous repulse.

1853. The steamer San Francisco, from New York to the Isthmus, was seriously injured by a violent storm off the coast of South Carolina. There were seven

hundred persons on board, most of them soldiers bound for California. The gale was so fierce that about one hundred and fifty of the troops were swept overboard, and the vessel was so injured as to be unmanageable. She drifted for several days, until near the latitude of Boston, when the survivors were taken off by passing vessels. Nearly two hundred of those on board lost their lives by this disaster.

1860. The Christmas Day of this year was the coldest ever experienced in England. The thermometer sank far below zero, at one point as much as 20° below. Enormous damage was done to vegetation throughout the island. The severely cold spell continued from the 28d to the 30th.

1864. The first attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina, was made on this day. This fort, which had been of the greatest assistance to blockade-runners, was assailed by a combined naval and land force, the latter under General Butler. A chief feature of the expedition, designed by Butler, was the explosion of a powder-ship near the fort, with the hope that this would shatter its walls. The ship was exploded, but the walls remained intact, and the assailants were repulsed. A second expedition, under General Terry, took the fort on January 15, 1865, and closed the last open port of the Confederacy.

1884. A severe earthquake took place in Spain, causing great loss of life and property. In Andalusia the loss of life was estimated at over one thousand, a mountain land-slip adding to the disaster. In the town of Alhama over one thousand houses were ruined, while several towns were destroyed in Malaga and Granada.

1885. A Christmas-tree in a Chicago hospital took fire from its candle-decorations, and a terrible panic ensued among the audience. Over one hundred persons were seriously injured in the flight.

December 26.:

St. Stephen's Day. St. Stephen, one of the seven deacons of the Christian Church at Jerusalem, was the first Christian martyr, being stoned to death by the Jews on a charge of blasphemy. This event took place about 35 or 37 A.D. The day is known in London and elsewhere in England as Boxing Day, it being the day on which Christmas-boxes were solicited and collected.

1776. The battle of Trenton took place on this day. Washington took advantage of the drunken Christmas carousal of the Hessians stationed at that place, crossed the Delaware amid floating ice on the night of the 25th, and attacked the British force early the next morning, win-

ning a complete victory. This event was of great importance, as raising the hopes of the colonists, who had been greatly depressed by their preceding misfortunes.

1811. A disastrous fire broke out in a theatre at Richmond, Virginia, in which an audience of more than six hundred persons were present. Nearly seventy lives were lost, among them the governor of the State and many prominent personages. Many more died afterwards of their injuries. The principal cause of the loss of life was that the doors opened inward and became immovably closed by the pressure against them of the crowd. This event, being the first of the kind in the country, was long remembered with horror.

1831. Stephen Girard died. He had attained great celebrity as being the richest man in America, though his wealth of nine million dollars is surpassed by that of hundreds at the present day. His eccentric character, miserly habits, and occasional fits of generosity, together with his unselfish devotion to the yellow-fever patients during the 1793 epidemic at Philadelphia, also made him famous. He added to his celebrity by his disposition of his money. Much of it was left to the city of Philadelphia for public purposes, and two millions were applied to building a college for orphans. This money was admirably handled by the trustees, and we have as its result the Girard College, at Philadelphia, the finest specimen of Grecian architecture in America. This institution has supported and educated thousands of orphans, and now has about fifteen hundred under its care.

1860. Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, was occupied by Major Anderson. This led to the first warlike operation of the civil war, the bombardment and capture of this fort by the Confederates.

1879. A fire broke out at Tokio, the capital of Japan, which destroyed fifteen thousand houses. A similar conflagration in 1878 had destroyed five thousand houses. The loss in these fires, however, was far from being as severe as these numbers indicate, the houses destroyed being flimsy wooden shells, of comparatively little cost, and easily replaceable.

1886. A revolt broke out among the prisoners in a penitentiary at Gaillon, near Rouen, France. Fifteen hundred prisoners took part in the riot, and threatened to burn down the prison unless allowed free passage through the soldiers who surrounded it. They held out for a considerable time, but capitulated on the arrival of fresh troops. The alleged causes of the outbreak were insufficiency and bad quality of bread, arbitrary con-

duct of the jailers, and night surveillance.

December 27.

1797. John Wilkes, a celebrated English politician, died. He conducted *The North Briton*, a journal which severely criticised the government. For one of his articles he was arrested in 1763, and in 1764 was convicted of libel and expelled from the House of Commons, and outlawed for having absented himself from the island. He returned, and was re-elected several times, but was refused a seat, fined, and imprisoned. The people, who looked upon him as their champion, continued to return him, and the House admitted him to a seat in 1774. He strongly opposed the American war.

1814. Joanna Southcott, or Southcote, a religious fanatic and pretended prophetess, died. She claimed to have received divine revelations, published several unintelligible books, and announced that she would give birth to a second Saviour. She had many followers, who are not yet quite extinct.

1834. Charles Lamb, the popular English essayist and humorist, died. The work by which he is best known is his "Essays of Elia," while his "Essays on the Tragedies of Shakespeare" and other critical works display the finest taste and literary judgment. His character was amiable and eccentric, with much quaintness of humor.

1870. General Prim, a noted Spanish leader, was assassinated in the streets of Madrid. He was the leader of the insurgents who deposed Queen Isabella in 1868, and was made minister of war and commander-in-chief under the new government. He was fired at and wounded in his carriage by six men, who escaped. He died on the 30th.

1880. Intensely cold weather began in the United States on this day. The thermometer went below freezing-point everywhere in the South, except in the lower part of Florida. It reached 20° at New Orleans, 9° at Shreveport, Alabama, and went below zero at Sherman, Texas, on the 29th. Such cold weather has rarely been known in the South. The orange-trees were seriously injured.

1883. The old house, 14 Portugal Street, London, which Dickens used as the example of his "Old Curiosity Shop," was ordered to be demolished as dangerous. It had been used for some years as a waste-paper storehouse.

1885. The volcano of Colima, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, broke out into violent eruption. Streams of lava completely covered its sides, flames darted from the crater, and wide-spread alarm prevailed among the people.

1886. The Temple Theatre, Philadelphia, caught fire and burned to the ground. A rehearsal was in progress at the time. The loss was about three hundred thousand dollars. This theatre was situated on the site of the old Masonic Temple.

December 28.

Innocents' Day, or Childermas Day, an anniversary observed since a very early date in memory of the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem by the order of Herod, with the purpose of destroying the infant Christ. In the Eastern or Greek Church this anniversary is observed on the 20th. One strange custom which is said to have arisen from it in the Middle Ages was that of administering a smart whipping to the children of the family on the morning of Childermas Day. This method of re-enacting the massacre of the innocents has, happily for the comfort of children, gone out of use.

1384. Wycliffe, a celebrated English religious reformer, died. He denounced the corruption of the Church and some of its doctrines, and advocated religious liberty. He had a strong following of disciples, who were called Lollards, and his views gained him so many friends in England as to protect him from the anger of churchmen. One of his most important achievements was the translation of the Bible into English, supposed to be the first complete English translation ever made. English prose literature may be considered as beginning with him.

1719. Flamsteed, an eminent English astronomer, died. His whole life was spent in observation of the stars, the results being embodied in his "Celestial History," a work which contained the first accurate catalogue of the stars. It is a valuable contribution to practical astronomy.

1834. Thomas R. Malthus, the author of the well-known Malthusian theory of population, died. His principal work was called "Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society," its theory being that population tends to increase in geometrical progression, while the food-supply can increase only in arithmetical progression, and that in time population must be in excess of food, and want or starvation ensue. This theory has been strongly combated, and is by no means in agreement with recorded facts.

1835. The "Dade Massacre" in Florida occurred on this day. Major Dade, with a party of over one hundred men, was ambushed by the Seminole Indians under Osceola, and the whole party killed

or mortally wounded. The Indians had affected peaceful intentions, and this treacherous outbreak of murder inaugurated a war which continued for seven years and ended in the complete subjection of the Florida Indians, most of the survivors being sent to the Indian Territory.

1857. The city of Canton, China, was bombarded and taken by the English and French fleets. The victors took possession of the city January 5, 1868, and held it till October, 1861, when it was restored to China.

1859. Macaulay, the eminent English historian, died. He was the author of numerous biographical essays and historical poems, of which latter "The Battle of Ivry" is the most admired. His great work was his "History of England." This work, covering but a few reigns, is notable for the attractiveness of its style, its great mass of political and gossip detail, and its numerous pen-pictures of the celebrities of the period which it covers.

1879. The Tay bridge was in great part destroyed by a gale. This great bridge, about two miles long, across the Tay at Dundee, Scotland, was much injured by a gale while building. It was opened May 31, 1878. On the present date, while the mail-train was passing over it, a section of about three thousand feet in length was carried away by the wind. Of the train-passengers more than seventy-five were killed.

December 29.

1170. Thomas à Becket was assassinated. This celebrated churchman, the Archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of England, entered into controversy with Henry II., who was seeking to diminish the power of the Church. Becket, supported by the Pope, defied the king, and was assassinated in Canterbury Cathedral by four barons, the king's servants. He was regarded as a martyr, and canonized by the Pope in 1172, while his shrine at Canterbury became the resort of great numbers of pilgrims. This pilgrimage formed the basis of Chaucer's celebrated "Canterbury Tales."

1778. The city of Savannah was taken by the British in the Revolutionary War. It was held from that time to the end of the war. The next capture of Savannah, as noted above, was made by General Sherman, December 21, 1864.

1812. The Constitution, an American frigate, captured the British frigate *Java*, after a severe engagement of three hours. The *Jaya* was disabled and her hull seriously shattered, while the Constitu-

tion did not lose a spar. Of her crew of four hundred one-third were killed and wounded.

1831. Hereditary peerage was abolished in France by a vote of the two chambers. The Chamber of Peers concurred in this bill by a vote of one hundred and three to seventy.

1837. The American steamboat *Caroline* was attacked and burned by the British near Schlosser, Lake Ontario. This affair took place during the Canadian insurrection. It aroused considerable feeling between the two countries, but nothing came of it.

1837. The Winter Palace at St. Petersburg caught fire and was burned to the ground. It was rebuilt in 1839 on a more magnificent scale, being one of the largest palaces in the world. Its dimensions are four hundred and fifty-five feet long and three hundred and fifty feet wide, and it is said that when occupied by the emperor it has more than six thousand inhabitants. It possesses much rich statuary and pictures, with magnificent tables and vases of malachite.

1847. The steamboat *A. N. Johnson* exploded her boiler, near Maysville, on the Ohio. Nearly eighty persons were killed and many more injured by this disaster.

1876. A disastrous railroad accident occurred near Ashtabula, Ohio, to the Pacific express from New York. A bridge over a creek broke down during a snow-storm, precipitating the train into the chasm. More than one hundred persons were killed by drowning, burning, and in other manners.

December 30.

1851. Louis Kossuth, the eminent Hungarian patriot, visited Washington on his journey through this country, where he everywhere met with a flattering reception. He organized the Hungarian insurrection of 1848 against the oppressive measures of the Austrian government. A severe war followed, Kossuth being made governor of Hungary, which was declared independent. The insurgents, however, were put down, and many atrocities committed. Kossuth escaped to Turkey, and subsequently visited England and the United States, being received in both countries with enthusiasm.

1861. The banks of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston suspended specie

payments. This action, rendered necessary by the depreciation of the value of paper currency in consequence of the financial operations of the war, was followed by government suspension on the following day, and the use of gold and silver as circulating money ceased for many years in the United States.

1866. The north wing of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, London, caught fire and was destroyed. This wing contained the tropical department, the Alhambra, and other courts. The building was originally erected for the World's Fair of 1851, and has been used since as a place of popular resort.

December 31.

1530. Mohammed Baber, the founder of the Mogul empire in India, died. This conqueror was a descendant of the celebrated Tamerlane, and was possessed of unusual military ability. His life was one of remarkable vicissitude, but he finally succeeded in gaining possession of Delhi, India, and establishing himself on the throne.

1775. General Montgomery was killed in an assault on Quebec. On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War two expeditions had set out against Canada, one under Montgomery and one under Benedict Arnold. After the death of Montgomery, Arnold remained in Canada till the following June, when he was obliged to retreat.

1829. The last execution in England for the crime of forgery took place on this day. The criminal was Thomas Maynard, who was hung at the Old Bailey prison.

1862. West Virginia was admitted as a State into the Union. This section of the old State of Virginia had been captured from the Confederates in the preceding year, and, its inhabitants being loyal to the Union, it was thus cut loose from its former relations and formed into a separate State.

1862. The battle of Murfreesborough, one of the severe engagements of the civil war, began on this day between the Union army under Rosecrans and the Confederate under Bragg. Rosecrans had the worst of this day's fight, but his forces were reformed and a second battle fought on January 2, 1863, in which Bragg was so roughly handled that he was obliged to retreat. The losses were from ten to twelve thousand on each side.

CURRENT NOTES.

WITH the popular appreciation for national characteristics in our art and literature the chances for a native American drama seem to be looking up. Bronson Howard's plays are of enduring excellence. Maurice Barrymore has produced one fine drama, and Mr. Nat Goodwin has a very humorous extravaganza from his pen under rehearsal. Charles Hoyt's farces have received the approbation of William D. Howells. Mr. Howells has himself written for the stage, his farce of "The Sleeping-Car" showing decided knowledge of stage art, and his adaptation of "Yorick's Love" being a favorite in Lawrence Barrett's *répertoire*. Mr. Neil Burgess has just made a great hit in a new play by Charles Barnard, "The County Fair," which deals with American country life, and is full of genuine, kindly humor and pathos.

And here is a young playwright, Sydney Rosenfeld, who has the almost unexampled good fortune of seeing two new plays of his drawing large houses simultaneously. "A Possible Case" is a comedy full of life and movement and sparkle. The comic opera of "The Lady or the Tiger?" is one of the best things of the sort ever produced in this country. It is different from the burlesques which have degraded our stage, and claims rank with the masterpieces of Gilbert. Frank R. Stockton is himself pleased with the clever manipulation of his short sketch into a most entertaining performance. "Your dramatic composition in three acts," he writes to Mr. Rosenfeld, "contains, of course, more of a story than my short sketch,—more plot, more incident, and very much more action; but you have so maintained the feeling and atmosphere of the original story that its characters, especially the semi-barbaric king and his daughter, seem as much at home in your work as in my own. That portion of the operetta which is entirely your own invention is admirable and effective. The situations are ingenious, and the action quick, bright, and calculated to excite a lively interest."

It may be understood at once that so far as hair, switches, curls, bangs, or wigs go, or any aids to the skin and hair, hands and eyes, in washes or unguents, America offers none of such value as those prepared by L. Shaw, the world-renowned alchemist and *coiffeur*, at 54 West Fourteenth Street, New York. Nor, in fact, is there in Europe just such a house as this, from which all our beautiful women procure toilet articles. Lovely actresses, as well as rulers in the social world, preserve their charms with cocoa-milk, mama dura, and the superfine Monte-Cristo rouge. Mrs. Shaw's fall opening, on October 15, was attended by crowds of the loveliest women ever seen together, many very grateful for past helps and anxious to see what Mrs. Shaw had discovered in Europe this summer. But Mrs. Shaw discovered nothing for the skin equal to her own "C. B.," the Eugénie's Secret, made of fine cocoa-milk. Advice by mail promptly given.

This famous house has been completely renovated, and furnished anew with handsome portières, Persian rugs and every facility for assisting at the toilet. The black-and-gold *repoussé* work and the many electric lights and potted palms make one of the most brilliant interiors in New York. This is the largest hair-cutting establishment in the world; the best artists are always engaged.

A DRAMATIZATION of that now famous story, "The Quick or the Dead?" was produced in New York by Estelle Clayton, and ran for three weeks with a fair measure of success. But, in truth, no good novel ever made a good play. Meanwhile, the negro minstrel companies have found it an excellent field for burlesque, which loves a high and shining mark. In Philadelphia, a burlesque by Mr. John L. Carncross crowded the theatre for over a month and was received with delight.

IN Parisian high life the great question of the day is the interesting discovery emanating from the celebrated Oriza Perfumery: we mean the "Solid Perfumes," varying in twelve delightful odors, in form of pencils and pastilles, and enclosed in coquette envelopes; indeed, a very charming bibelot of portable size, and an invention as agreeable as useful, surrounding the wearer with bewitching scent. To perfume any article agreeably and instantaneously, simply rub upon it lightly. The "Ess. Oriza Solid Perfumes" are sold by all good druggists and chemists of the United States; in Paris by the inventor, Mr. Legrand, Oriza Perfumery, 207 Rue St.-Honoré. (General Agents for the United States, Park & Tilford, 917-919 Broadway, New York.)

THE following graceful tribute to Miss Grace King's story, "Earthlings," is deemed worthy of publication, being specially valuable as the opinion of one well-known Southern lady-author upon another of that ilk:

"I have just laid Miss King's story out of my hand, and wish, while the impression is fresh, to testify to the exquisite pleasure its perusal gave me. The grace, tenderness, purity, and simplicity of the story give it a charm which is rare in fiction of the present day. In my opinion, 'Earthlings' is the strongest as well as the most delightful story which has appeared in *Lippincott's* for eighteen months past. The nobility of the conceptions, the subtlety of analysis, the absence of all exaggeration, rant, and hysterical straining for theatrical effect, combine to make the story a little gem. It will please me greatly to know that I may look forward to another meeting with Miss King in the pages of *Lippincott* in the near future.

M. G. McCLELLAND."

AN edition in book form of "The Quick or the Dead?" is just ready. This famous novel is issued in handsome 12mo form, and contains an introduction written specially for it by Amélie Rives, in which she explains her motives in writing the novel and takes occasion to answer her critics in a good-humored but very effective manner.

MISS JULIA MAGRUDER's novel "Honored in the Breach," which was published in the March (1888) *Lippincott's*, has just been issued in book form in England, with a dedication to Amélie Rives Chanler. The story is a study of widowhood, and in its bold outlines the critics have discovered some resemblance to "The Quick or the Dead?"

THE *Art Journal* of New York is one of the liveliest and brightest art publications among our exchanges. The letter-press is always entertaining, and the illustrations represent a high level of merit on the part of both artist and engraver.

WILLIAM S. WALSH's "Paradoxes of a Philistine" is a pretty little 12mo which contains a good deal of entertaining reading.

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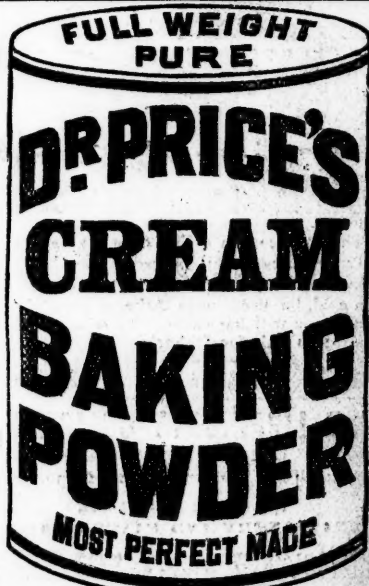


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